TALKS

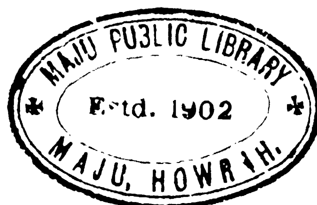
ON

"AT THE FEET OF THE MASTER"

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"At the Feet of the Master"



BY

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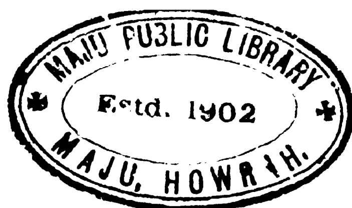
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I

December 8, 1914.

YOU have all heard very often about the qualifications for the Path—too often, I dare say, some of you think. But it is never too often, unless you have achieved, until you have succeeded in putting into practice everything that is written in the books on the subject. There is no mystery about the matter. There is no difficulty in knowing exactly what ought to be done, but of course there is a difficulty in doing it. But the difficulty is all in ourselves; there is no obstacle in your path which is not of your own making. Nevertheless only comparatively few people do succeed in following the directions that are given. Why is it that more do not succeed, when so many are really earnestly trying? The reason is that each of us has a powerful personality, and that this personality very often, sadly often, gets in the way. We have to learn to apply, each one of us to himself,

what is written in these books. I cannot do that for you; I can tell you what you ought to do; I can try to explain; I can illustrate in various ways, but each person must do the actual work for himself. It is like physical culture, like training for a race or some effort of that sort; there may be a trainer who can give useful hints and can tell you what to do; but the candidate himself must exercise his own muscles, and nobody can by any possibility do that for him. So with the qualifications; the requirements are clear enough, but I think that very few people fully grasp how real the effort must be. We are surrounded by people, millions of people; many of them are religious in their way, and are supposed to be living according to the precepts of their religion. Practically, scarcely any of them do it.

I do not say for a moment, mind, that many of them do not lead very good and holy lives, no doubt many of them do; but they do not live strictly according to the precepts laid down for them. In some cases these precepts perhaps are unnecessary; but in the case of the Path of occultism, no precept given is unnecessary; an exact adherence is required. I do not mean that we must possess all these qualifications in absolute perfection before we can be received by a Master; absolute perfection would mean the instantaneous attainment of Adeptship; but at least we must possess these things to a reasonable extent, and they must be real and not merely

polite fictions. That ought not to be a new idea; but really it does seem as though it has to be emphasised over and over again. People apparently do not grasp the fact that in occultism we mean exactly what we say. It is like science. If a scientific professor tells you to do certain things, to compound certain chemicals, and so on, to get certain results, you know that, if you follow his directions, you must obtain these results. If you vary the proportions, you will not only not get the results, but you may produce something undesirable—an explosion or something of that sort. In religious matters people seem to think a kind of vague approximation to the directions given is quite sufficient. Occultism must be taken not as religion, but as science, and although you all have heard so often about these qualifications, I yet hope that if we go through them carefully and really try to understand what is required, and to do it, we may after all achieve the result.

These inner things are not far away and uncertain. They are realities. They are facts like the facts of science and, that being so, why should not some of us take up the task and succeed?

Let us see how far it is possible to carry the thing through. If we have not yet succeeded, it is because there is in each of us some obstacle that is holding us back. In some this takes one shape; in others it is something quite different; but, if there were not something lacking which we should have, then we

should all have succeeded. And it is worth while trying to find out what is lacking. It is nearly always the personality in some form or other. The form of the obstacle is different in each case ; but it is worth while making a more definite effort to find out what is the matter and to put it out of the way, because you, who have studied these things, must know that there is a real inner world which quite infinitely surpasses in importance all this outer world which is so incessant in its pressure upon us. We live in a great city here, with a whirl of business and pleasure always going on about us. Everywhere there are people who think they are so busy and so wise in following all their respective lines. And yet the truth is that all of these are working in the unreal and the outer; they have not, most of them, even realised that there is an inner and spiritual world which is of enormously more importance, of far greater value in every way, than this which is external. In this we have to play our parts, but we play them only because it is so demanded of us by the true life inside. In this we resemble actors. Actors play on the stage and try to play their parts well. But after all, why does an actor play upon the stage ? Because he has another life to live, a life which is consecutive and coherent ; he may take other parts at different times just as we come back in other incarnations and wear other kinds of bodies, but all the time the actor has his real life as a man ; and because he is not only

a man but, in most cases, an artist as well, he feels that he owes it to that real life to play his part well in the temporary life of the stage. And so our reason for wishing to do well in our temporary life here is because of the great reality behind, of which that life is but a part, albeit only a very small part. Now, if we can get that clearly into our minds, we see at once what is the relative importance of this outer life. Its only importance to us is that we should play our part well in it ; beyond that, what happens to us in this mimic life does not matter. It may be the actor's business to go through all sorts of mimic sorrows and difficulties. He may be killed in a duel ; but he himself does not care about his pretended death. The only thing that concerns him is that he should acquit himself well. That is exactly our position, but what happens to us in the process of it, whether it be happiness, or sorrow and suffering—that, after all, is only the fortune of the play. It belongs to the part which we are taking. The important thing is to play the part well.

It is hard, I know, to realise that the world about us is merely a mimic world, that really and truly it does not matter. And yet this is absolutely true of everything which happens to us from outside ; all events, all things that happen to you from outside are the result of your karma ; they belong to your past. You made them long ago in other lives ; and since you cannot now alter those other lives, therefore

it is of no use worrying about the things that happen to you as a result of that unalterable past. You must bear them philosophically; that is the best you can do. You can, of course, bear them foolishly; you can let them trouble you; you can let them cause you a vast amount of pain, suffering and worry. But, if you will simply regard them as the inevitable results of a past which you cannot now alter, and then think of them as little as may be, except in so far as you seek to derive from them the lessons which they are meant to teach, you can do much, in this way, to mould your character for your future. The only thing which is necessary is that you should do your duty. The past is past, there is no use worrying about it. Try, in bearing your karma, to develop in yourselves courage, endurance and various other good qualities and then let it go. Fulfil all the duties that are cast upon you in this strange play of life, and you will be doing all that is required of you. This, at least, is of infinite importance, since upon it depends your future.

Now you have to get into that point of view. It is not easy, because around us are people by the thousand who are taking the play seriously and thinking of it as the real life. It is not so much what they say to you and do to you (although that counts) that causes the difficulty; it is the immense, the incessant pressure of public opinion. Against the enormous weight of this pressure, the pressure of

many hundreds to each one who knows the truth, you have to fight; and it is not easy. Of course the incessant pressure of this thought is not intentional. It is for most people the only obvious and natural way of thinking. They say to themselves: "We must make haste to gain possessions and riches; for this is what all our fellow-men think to be the true goal of life." Now you have to make a stand for yourselves against these really tremendous odds. You have to say to yourselves: "No, this is not so, this is the unreal." The real is the underlying life, the life which persists, the life which, as your Scripture puts it, is "hid with Christ in God". That is the real. But to live in that all the time and to forget the outer—not to forget it because you have to do your duty in it, but to regard it as comparatively of no importance—is not easy; but this is exactly what you have to do.

Remember how a Master said in the beginning: "He who wishes to follow us must come out of his world into ours." This does not mean that you must give up your daily life and live as a hermit, but it does mean that you must abandon your attitude and adopt that of the Masters.

If you succeed in your efforts, some day you will be pupils of one or other of these Great Ones, and when you reach that stage, the stage of the accepted disciple, you will find that your thought is part of the thought of your Master; and then constantly you will find it to your advantage to test your thought by the

thought of your Master, and find out exactly what He thinks (you can do that when you are part of Him) on any given subject, and make your thought like His. Well, when that happy time comes, you will soon get into the way of this testing your thought, you will understand His point of view. But at first you will be constantly meeting with unexpected shocks. You will find that things which seemed of vast importance to you do not matter at all, while other things which you had passed by as comparatively unimportant stand out as of great importance. This is because in some way, great or small, these seemingly unimportant things affect your usefulness, and whatever affects your usefulness is important because there you touch upon the real thing. In this way you will learn by degrees to contact the underlying Reality.

What is that Reality? Simply this—that there is a God, who permeates all. That is the profound Truth in relation to which the reality of all things has to be tested, and it is the only test in the world.

You must learn to look from within and not merely from without, and then your idea of relative values will change very much. It is one of our greatest difficulties to learn to weigh things always from the inner and not from the outer point of view. Many of us really and earnestly wish to do that, and yet quite constantly fall short of our desire because the pressure of the opinion of the world is so

great, and because, being so great, it acts upon the mind with a kind of authority—so much so that the thought which it generates is often mistaken for an idea inspired from on high. The first pressure that comes upon your mind is not from on high at all, it is from a very worldly level as a rule. You must shake yourselves free of that; shut your ears to that, keep them open only to the sound from above, to the voice of the Master and to His thought. It is little wonder that, in those older days, in India and other countries, whenever men set themselves to live the spiritual life, the first thing they did was to get out of the ordinary life, to go away and live in a cave or a jungle, somewhere, by themselves. You see how great an advantage they gained. They went away from this pressure of opinion. They were free then to follow their own way, much more free than we are. What we are trying to do is, I quite admit, a much more difficult thing. We have to attempt the same task while remaining in the outer world, because it is that world which we are intended to help, and to help not from without by meditation and by thought alone, as no doubt the hermit and the monk did, but by actively living in it. It is a very beautiful idea, it is a great privilege for us, but it is hard; and the result of the difficulty has been that very few have really been successful in the attempt. They have been content to take the Theosophical teachings in the same way that the average Christian takes the

Christian religion, thinking of it as a very nice thing to talk about on Sunday, but not at all the thing to carry out into practice every day and all day long. We, who are Theosophists, should know better than that; it is obvious that we must be consistent and practical. We must bring what we learn right down into everyday life. Why do we find this so difficult? It is not, I really believe, that any of us, any one of you, would not be perfectly willing to make some great effort for the Theosophical idea. If you could help a Master and see Him before you; if you could do some piece of work for Him, you would do it though it cost you your life. It is the difficulty of steady, persevering effort. Remember what St. Augustine long ago said: "Many there are who will die for Christ, but few there are who will live for Him." To live for Him—that is much harder! It sounds magnificent, heroic, to become a martyr, to die for Christ. It is truly so, but at least the man who does it has the feeling that he is making a mighty effort; he is buoyed up by the exhilaration of the greatness of his own sacrifice, and the consciousness of it sustains and strengthens him through the pain and suffering. What you have to do is much harder than that; you cannot keep yourselves keyed up to that pitch of heroism. You will find this difficult all through the little daily troubles that are perpetually coming to you. You cannot hope to keep the same equability of mind when you are dealing day after day with the

same wearisome people who will not do the thing you think they should do. It is not the mighty effort of dying: the small daily life, the living for Christ, that is the hard thing. Indeed, it is just because these things seem comparatively small that there is so much difficulty in following the Path.

Well, we will take, you and I, these books that teach us. We will follow them through and see how far it is possible to apply them. Mind, others like you have done it, and succeeded; let us see, therefore, what can at least be done by trying. But why should we fail? Let us try; only remember it does mean the conquest of self. It means that you will have to take yourselves in hand and face the facts, and, where there are weeds, to pull them up. It does not matter what comes, or how much suffering it entails—up with them! They *must* come up. Hard work, it is true; but those who have already entered on some of the higher stages, they can tell you it is very well worth while, nay, infinitely worth while, to make any effort, great or small, once for all or many times. It is very well worth while indeed.

So I say, we will take these books and we will work through them. We have three books in our literature which are most of all devoted to this question of the Path. We have *At the Feet of the Master*, we have *The Voice of the Silence* and we have *Light on the Path*; beautiful all of them, valuable all of them, each in its different way. Of course, besides

these we have also what may be taken as comments on them, books by our President. *In the Outer Court*, *The Path of Discipleship*, and so on, all these are very valuable as throwing additional light; but perhaps, first of all, it is better to take these books which come to us directly from the Great Ones and see what it is that They want, and whether we cannot fulfil it.

The simplest of all the books which I have mentioned is the last in point of time, the book *At the Feet of the Master*. It is the best and the most valuable for us at the moment because of its extreme simplicity, and because it bears specially the stamp of the teaching of the World Teacher, Who is so soon to come amongst us.

This book *At the Feet of the Master* represents more especially the teaching of the World Teacher Who is to come, the Lord Maitreya, the Bodhisattva. As you know, it consists of teaching given by the Master Koot Hoomi to Alcyone, on the occasion of the preparation for his Initiation. I know something about that, because I myself had to take a prominent part in the preparatory work. Your President and I were appointed as guardians, in the physical world, of this boy Alcyone. You know of course, I suppose, that Alcyone is only a name given him for the purposes of the series of lives which were published in *The Theosophist*. In the course of that series a number of characters appeared again and again, and we had to invent names for them. We did

not give their names in this present incarnation, first of all because some people do not like their past peccadilloes to be known, although I do not quite see why they should mind ; still, some people dislike it, and also, and quite apart from that, it is better to have some kind of euphonious title which can be used again and again. You do not want to introduce the idea of personality. It is much better that those who are studying the line of lives should have a *nom de plume*, and not be thinking how all this is related to the present life. We took a number of star names, when at first we had only some twenty or thirty characters, but as the number grew, we took in other names, some of them names of Greek heroes. We gave first the names of planets to those who became Masters. Many of these names are published in *Man : Whence, How and Whither*. A still larger number have been published by Mr. C. Jinarajadasa in an article in *The Theosophist*, in the course of this year. But " Alcyone " was simply the name given to Mr. Krishnamurti, an Indian who was then a boy of thirteen. As his knowledge of English was very imperfect, the language of the teachings had to be made intelligible to a brain of that age. So you will realise how exceedingly simple the thing had to be made. And yet the Master, with His wonderful power of adaptability, contrived to put all that was necessary, if carried out, for the acquirement of the first Initiation, into that wonderfully simple style, into this book

which we have before us. That is one of its very great recommendations, its exceeding simplicity. The other two books, *The Voice of the Silence* and *Light on the Path* are very beautiful and poetical, but it is impossible to deny that at times they are obscure, and people have sometimes made that their excuse for not trying to live up to them. No one can complain that he does not understand this book, at least. This at all events is clear enough; it is easy enough to grasp well. Not only that, but it has the great recommendation that it bears the special imprimatur of the Lord Maitreya Himself.

The story of how it came to be written is comparatively simple. Every night I had to take this boy in his astral body to the house of the Master, that instruction might be given to him. The Master devoted perhaps fifteen minutes each night to talking to him, but at the end of each talk he always gathered up the main points of what He had said in a single sentence, a few sentences perhaps, and made it into a little easy summary which was repeated to the boy, so that he learnt it by heart. He remembered that summary in the morning and wrote it down. The book, *At the Feet of the Master*, consists of these sentences, of the epitome of the Master's teaching, made by the Master Himself, and in His own words. There are passages, which I shall point out as I go through the book, which are clearly written by Alcyone himself, to connect the

sentences; but practically the whole thing is built up of the Master's own words. Well, the boy wrote them down somewhat laboriously, because his English was not very good. He wrote them down in a school exercise-book, mostly in pencil, sometimes with a pen, and sometimes on scraps of paper, but there they were. He knew all these things by heart and did not trouble particularly about them. He went up at one time to Benares in the north of India with our President. While there he wrote to me, I being down at Adyar, and asked me to collect together and send to him these notes that he had made of what the Master had said. I gathered together all these notes, arranged them as well as I could, and typed them all out. Then it seemed to me that as these were the Master's words, nearly all of them, I had better make sure there was no mistake. Therefore I took the type-written copy which I had made to the Master K. H. and asked Him to be so kind as to read it over. He read it, altered a word or two, here and there. He added some sentences, and I recognised them. Then He said: "Yes, that seems correct; that will do"; but He added: "Let us show it to the Lord Maitreya." And so we went together, He taking the book, and it was shown to the World Teacher Himself. He read it over and approved of it. It was He who said: "You should make a nice little book of this to introduce Alcyone to the

world." We had not meant to introduce Alcyone to the world; we had not thought it desirable that a mass of thought should be concentrated on a boy of thirteen, who still had his education before him. But in the Occult world we do what we are told, and so this book was put into the printer's hands the following morning.

All the things we expected from undue publicity, and more, came about; but still the Lord Maitreya was right, and we were wrong, for the good that was done by that book far outweighs the trouble it brought to us. Numbers of people, literally thousands, have written to say how their whole lives have been changed by that book, how everything has become different to them because they have read it. It has been translated into twenty-seven languages. There have been some forty editions of it, or more; over a hundred thousand copies have been printed. A wonderful work has been done by it. Above all, it bears that special imprimatur of the Coming World Teacher, and that is the thing that makes it so valuable—the fact that it shows us, to a certain extent, what His teaching is to be to a certain extent.

Now, I wish to take this little book and go through it with you, sentence by sentence, and as we go through it we will try to note the points where His interpretation differs from that of His Predecessor, the Lord Buddha. For it is the Lord Buddha's interpretation that you have in the Hindu and Pali books.

II

December 15, 1914.

THE name of the book was chosen by our President (there were thirty or forty names suggested); and she also is responsible for the dedication "To those who knock," the symbolism there being obvious: "Knock and it shall be opened unto you. Seek and ye shall find." And so she dedicated it to all those all over the world who desire to enter the higher life—those who knock, those who seek. In her preface she writes:

> The privilege is given to me, as an elder, to pen a word of introduction to this little book, the first written by a younger Brother; young in body verily, but not in Soul.

There is a point there of great importance; you know in ordinary life, thinking only of this world and this one incarnation, we judge by the age of the physical body. As a matter of fact, it hardly needs to be pointed out that the age of the physical body is of only secondary importance. What matters in occult progress is the age of the ego, the age of the soul within; and so you find sometimes curious anomalies. You find it is not the age of the body that determines the development of the

intelligence, the emotional powers, and the possession of occult knowledge.

You must beware of judging by externals only; everyone in the world does that, therefore it is not unnatural that we should do the same, but as a matter of fact it is a mistake, and you must be prepared to look for evidence of progress sometimes, even though bodies may be quite young. So here, in the case of Alcyone, the President speaks of him in the preface as, "young in body verily, but not in Soul". Now and again you come on an instance of one who is able to uproot a passion and change it in a few days—a few weeks—but a young soul could not do that. That is a definite sign of advancement, of very decided advancement; yet you will find this kind of thing beginning to happen fairly frequently in these days. The Great Teacher is coming soon, and His principal disciples must certainly be people not older than Himself in the physical body, men in the prime of life and strength, and since He is to come soon it follows that those who are to be His disciples then must be young now. They well may be some of your own children. At least there is a possibility in favour of such a suggestion, because it is likely that those who are destined for such a fate would be born where they could have the teaching that would fit them for it. And where could that be found except in Theosophical families? Therefore it is exceedingly probable that some of those who are children now among you

may in the future be prominent in the work ; and so you have to watch for such possibilities and more especially you have to see that any children that come in your way, either your own or those over whom you have any sort of influence, shall be taught about the coming of the World Teacher, so that they may know the possibility which lies before them. You can only tell them, you must leave it to them to grasp the opportunity ; but at least it would be very sad if any parent should much later have the reproach thrown at him by his son or daughter : " If you had told me about these things when I was young, I might have taken the opportunity ; but you let me grow up without knowing anything about it ; you let me grow into the worldly life, and therefore when the opportunity offered, I did not take it." It would be a sad thing for any parent to have that said to him. We can, accordingly, see that all children who come into contact with us are, as far as may be, taught something of all this ; when that is done, then our duty is over, because it is not for us to try to force anyone into any line ; it is not for us even to map out a future and expect these other greater souls to adhere to it. They may have their own ideas ; but at least I think we should give them their opportunity.

The President goes on to say : " The teachings contained in it [this book] were given to him [Alcyone] by his Master in preparing him for Initiation." Now that

is our first important point, what exactly is meant by Initiation? The word, I may tell you, has been very much misused. Madame Blavatsky herself in the earlier days was made to use it somewhat loosely, when her thought was translated by those who only partially understood it; and many other Theosophical writers, with very far less excuse, have followed in her steps in that way. The word "Initiation" ought to be confined to the real Initiations, to the definite steps, or shall I say, the definite ceremonies, which separate the steps on the Path Proper, the old term. You may remember that in older writings we spoke of the Probationary Path, the Path Proper and the Official Period, as three stages in the development of man. I remember that I used that classification myself in *Invisible Helpers*, which was one of my first books. The Probationary Path means the period of probation for Initiation; the Path Proper is the "Path of Holiness" of the Buddhist and the Hindu—that Path which begins with the first of the Great Initiations, and ends with the attainment of Adeptship. It is only for those steps, the five steps on that Path Proper, that the word "Initiation" ought to be used. People have unfortunately employed it for stages on the Probationary Path. I remember when I joined it we used to talk about initiation into the Theosophical Society. People still use the word in connection with masonic and similar ceremonies. There is no harm in that, if

you understand precisely what you are talking about, but very decidedly there should be no confusion in our minds. Then again in the early days we used to speak of this Probationary Path, the time of preparation for Initiation, as being divided into stages. Those stages correspond simply to the four Qualifications which are given to you in these books, and which you know so well: Discrimination, Desirelessness, Good Conduct, and Love. There are different translations of the Samskrit words as there are for the Pāli names. I shall give you those as we go through it. But you must remember that these things were spoken of as "stages" and sometimes a reference was made to "Initiations" between them. That is quite a misrepresentation, because the qualifications are not at all necessarily acquired in a fixed order. They are written down in that order in the old Oriental books, but most of us, I take it, are trying to attain all of them simultaneously—not one by one. Discrimination has a certain position as coming first because it means the discrimination which enables a man to choose to enter upon the Path at all. The Buddhist name for it is *Manodvaravajjana*, which means the "Opening of the doors of the mind". It is at this point, in other words, that the man's mind is opened for the first time to see that the spiritual things are the only real things and that the ordinary worldly life is a waste of time. The Christian calls that "conversion,"

which again is a very expressive word, because conversion means turning and coming together with. It is derived from the supine of *verto*, to turn, and *con*, together with. It means that the man, having gone previously his own way—having known nothing about the Divine Will and Its direction—has realised the great trend of evolution, and the direction in which the Divine Will wishes the evolutionary current to flow, and, having realised it, turns and goes with it. Of course I know with many Christian sects it means a sort of spasmodic hysterical condition, but at least that is the true meaning—the turning about and going along with the Divine Will; and that is the same thing as the *Manodvaravajjana* of the Buddhist, or the "Discrimination" of the Hindu. Of course discrimination means much more than merely the learning of what things are worth while, and what are not. It is a very far-reaching quality; so that there is some reason for putting it first. But the other qualifications you develop as best you can, and in any order which you may prefer. There are no divisions between them—nothing to which the name of "Initiation" should at all rightly be given. Nor must the various steps, which mark your personal relationship to the Master, be for a moment confounded with Initiations. Remember that real Initiations are given only by the Great White Brotherhood—by the Occult Hierarchy—and given in the name of the One Initiator, and by His order

alone. Your private relationship with your Master, that is your own and His affair.

Remember that the real Probationary Path has nothing to do with this probationary path, although it is probable that the two may coincide. You may be a fully accepted pupil; you may be what is called "a son of the Master"; those are your private relations with your Master, and you must not confuse them in your minds with the Initiations which are given by the Great Hierarchy itself. The latter are like degrees conferred by a university; your private relations with your Master are like those of the student with the Head of his college—there is nothing official about them. That is a thing which we must keep clear in our thought.

What then do we mean by Initiation in this case? We mean the first step which makes a man a member of that Great Brotherhood. Now that step is not conferred arbitrarily. It is a recognition of the attainment of a certain stage of evolution—a stage marked by what used to be called in the earlier books, "the union of the higher and the lower self," the union of the ego and the personality. A man who wishes to put himself forward as a candidate for the First Great Initiation must acquire the Qualifications given in this book, and he must make his personality an expression of the ego and nothing else; there must be no lower personality left to thrust itself forward, to have desires of its own in

opposition to the Higher Self. The lower must be simply an expression of the higher. You will see that very well exemplified if you will look at the illustration given in *Man, Visible and Invisible.* Looking at the astral body, say, of a savage; very weird and curious . . . full of colours which indicate all sorts of lower passions; irregular in outline because of the lack of control over it. If you look at the causal and mental bodies you will find that they have no apparent relation to one another. The causal is apparently blank; the mental body has a little development, but it has not much relation to the astral body. Turn on to the advanced man, and there you will find that those vehicles, which, in the savage, had no relation to one another, are now very closely linked. Now you will find that the causal body is full instead of being empty; that all the different colours expressive of the higher virtues are developed in it, and that it is already beginning to pour itself out in various directions for the helping of others. But the mental body, you will see, also contains the same colours, somewhat denser but still the finest of their kind, and they represent the causal body at the lower level. The astral body is absolutely a mirror of the mental, the same colours only just a little darker and denser, because a plane lower. The astral body is the vehicle of the emotions and passions. There are in the savage all sorts of emotions and passions that have nothing to do with his mind. He does not

think about them. He does not know how to think. They are simply there, and they run away with him. When you come to the advanced man you will find he has only such emotions in the astral body as his mind selects and permits. He chooses to allow himself to feel very strongly love, devotion, sympathy, etc., and therefore all these qualities are shown in the astral body, but there are none of the other passions of which the intellect would not approve. Now you will see what that means. If the emotions are already under the full dominion of the mind and the mind itself is an expression of the causal body, we are coming very near to the condition of absolute unity of the higher and lower self. The self in the savage expresses itself in all kinds of different emotions and passions of which the ego could not possibly approve, but here in the developed man there are no emotions—only such as the man chooses he shall have. Instead of being swayed by his emotions and carried off his feet, he simply selects them. He says, " Love is a good thing, I will allow myself to feel love; devotion is a good thing, I will allow myself to feel devotion; sympathy, that is beautiful, I will allow myself to feel sympathy"; and he does it with his eyes open; he does it intentionally. Well, that is what we are striving for when we speak of joining the higher and the lower self. There never was any lower self as a separate entity, but the ego puts down a tiny fragment of himself into this personality in

order that the personality may experience the vibrations of the lower worlds. That is why the personality exists at all. The personality becomes much more individually alive than the ego because it is at a stage where it can respond to these vibrations, and consequently it forgets that it belongs to the ego, forgets that it is a fragment of him, and sets up on its own account and tries to go as *it* would instead of as the ego would. It takes a long time and much development to recognise that the personality is nothing but an expression of the ego, and that, wheresoever it departs from its mission as an expression of the ego, it is going wrong and needs repressing. In *The Voice of the Silence* you are told that the disciple should "slay the lunar form," that is, the astral body. This means, not that he should commit an astral murder, but that the astral body should be allowed to have no existence but as an expression of the higher. Instead of having its own passions and emotions it must reflect only what the ego chooses. Now, you must attain to that before you can present yourselves for the First Initiation. You must have control of your physical, your astral and your mental bodies. They must become simply expressions of the ego and servants of the ego, as they ought to be. That means a good deal, you know; it means a very great deal for the ordinary person.

It ought not to be so serious a demand to make upon you who have been studying the laws of the

inner life for some years, who have been meditating for a long time past and trying to control these lower vehicles. To you these things ought not to seem impossible, but the man in the world says: "I cannot do that—it is of no use talking about it." It is altogether too high an ideal to set before him all at once, but it should not be so for you; and at least some of us should prepare ourselves in our present incarnation to greet the Lord when He comes—with the enormous additional advantage of having made ourselves capable of greater usefulness—for that is what it means—by taking these steps. If you take these Initiations, it is not for yourselves, not that you yourselves may escape from the sorrow and the suffering of the world, but that you may be of use in the mighty Plan. Therefore we undertake the almost incredible struggles and efforts which are required. For you need not think (although one should never wish to discourage anyone) that it is an easy thing to attain these levels, to tread down one by one all sorts of passions and desires, to curb the astral body and the mental body. These things are hard; of course they are splendidly well worth doing, and the reward attained thereby—I do not like the word "reward"—the result attained thereby is quite out of all proportion even to those great efforts; but the efforts are great; it does mean hard work. There is no doubt about it. We undertake that work, not for ourselves but for others, although you might well

undertake it even if there were no other reason. For what is the meaning of this first great step? The man who takes it has entered upon the stream. The Christian calls him the man who is "saved," or "safe". That means that he is quite sure to go on in this present stream of evolution, and not to drop out at the "day of judgment" in the next Round, so that even for himself it is a stupendous achievement, this union of the higher and the lower self. But the attainment of it is, by the nature of the case, a thing you must do yourself. There is no sort of vicarious atonement possible in this matter, it is not possible that somebody else should do it for you. Somebody else may show you how, but you yourselves must individually do the work that it requires. This means that you must bring yourselves up to a certain standard; and when you have reached that, the Hierarchy recognises you as a member of the Great Brotherhood. The First Initiation is the ceremony which officially admits a man to that Brotherhood, which makes him saved or safe; and the words used in admitting him to it include that very verse: "You are now safe for ever; you have entered upon the stream; may you soon reach the further shore"—the further shore being Adeptship, because that is the next great stage. If you think of it, there are certain definite stages which outweigh all others in importance in a man's existence; the first of these is when he individualises, when he comes forth from the

animal kingdom and begins his career as an ego. The entry into the human kingdom is of course a point of stupendous importance, so too is the attainment of Adeptship, which signalises his departure from the human kingdom and his entry into the superhuman. The latter is the goal which is set before humanity—the point which it must endeavour to attain in this Chain of worlds. At the end of this Chain of worlds the man who has done what God willed him to do, who has carried out to the utmost the Divine Design for himself, will have passed out of the human kingdom. Some of us may do it long before that; nevertheless that is what is to be done.

Now these two are, of course, points of enormous importance: the entry upon the human kingdom and the leaving it for the kingdom of the superhuman; but in between those two comes another point of importance quite as great, and that is the definite entry on the stream, the point of the First Great Initiation, when a man definitely takes the first step of the union of the ego and the personality. He has to pass the Second, Third and Fourth Initiations before he reaches Adeptship, which is the Fifth; but when he gains that Fifth, that of Adeptship, he unites the monad and the ego just as before he has united the ego and the personality, so that when you have achieved the union of the higher and lower self, when your personality no longer exists except as an expression of the ego, you have to begin the

very same process over again, as it were, and make that ego an expression of the Monad.

Whether there lies another stage of the same sort beyond, we do not know; but I can quite well imagine it to be possible that, when we attain Adeptship, when we make the ego an instrument in the hands of the Monad, we shall find opening before us a still more glorious vista. That may well be: I do not know. I do not know whether there is any end or not. A great philosopher once said: "It is equally inconceivable that there should be an end, or that there should be no end; yet one of those must be true." Of that we know nothing. They speak of absorption into the Supreme; as to that we know nothing. We know that our consciousness widens and widens and continues to widen; that it includes consciousness after consciousness above and beyond our own; all this we know by direct personal experience. We know that it is possible to touch the buddhic level, and that when one touches it one finds an enormous expansion of consciousness, so that besides oneself one is also other and greater people as well; one includes those consciousnesses also. But remember, you include them (or it seems that you include them) in your own consciousness. It does not seem to you that you have lost your individuality at all, but that you have so widened it that you are able to feel through them as well as through yourself; that is what really happens. It is the

meditational practice of those who can do that to continue to do it and expand it until they take in more and more consciousness—not only those far above them, but those below them. Those above them, however, come first because they are so much the stronger, so much more tremendous in their power. That expansion takes place gradually and you work your way through sub-plane after sub-plane of buddhic consciousness until you presently learn to develop a buddhic vehicle—a body you can use at that stupendous level, at which all the spheres seem as one; at which you can pass through space without passing through space in our sense of the word at all. Now since that is within the experience of quite a number of us, we are justified in assuming that the further extensions of that consciousness will be to some extent of the same kind; since we have attained that unity without losing our sense of individuality in the very least, without feeling ourselves merged in a shining sea, as the poet puts it, but feeling instead as though the shining sea has been poured into the drop, that the sea has become contained in the drop. That is what happens, however paradoxical that may sound, that is the sensation, that the consciousness of the drop widens into the consciousness of the sea. That being so, so far as we know it, we are surely justified in assuming that there will not be any sudden change in the method. We cannot conceive, after tremendous

periods of time, suddenly being merged into something else and losing that consciousness which we have taken so long to develop. No, I believe it will widen and widen, that we may become one with God, but only in the sense in which Christ put it when He said: "Ye are Gods; and all of you are children of the Most High." We shall become one with God because we shall realise that we are God and we have been all the time; but we did not know it. Something like that is the line along which that splendid development will go. But what the ultimate end of it is, I do not know. We can see far behind in evolution and we can see far in front in evolution. We can guarantee to you, as far as your own future goes, millions of years, of æons, of useful activity, on splendid levels whose glory and power and love and development are inconceivable down here. That much we can say, for certain. But what lies at the end of those millions of æons we do not know, but that is enough for most of us—that, even though extinction should lie at the end. Even then (inconceivable though it would be) it would be well worth while to have lived and loved and worked through all those millions of æons. But it cannot end in extinction, although to what it does lead I do not know. But, if you think of the thing from a common-sense point of view, we can hardly expect to know. Do you not see that if the final end of it were something that we could now understand, it would be a very poor kind

of end? It would be altogether out of proportion to all the stages which lead up to it.

Our intellect is a very narrow and limited thing; how limited it is you do not know until you come in touch with greater development. Then you begin to see that the intellect we have boasted about so much is a very poor thing—a merest beginning—only a seed of what it will be in the future; and if, in that preliminary stage, we could comprehend the end of all, such an end would be utterly inadequate. Therefore I think you cannot expect to know; you cannot expect to follow and understand either the beginning or the end. We are not in a position to do it; we can no more understand that than a little child with his strength can move a huge rock; he will perhaps be able to do it presently when he grows up (when he has the aid of mechanical appliances), but any attempt to do it now would be foredoomed to failure. Our intellect is in that very position, for all that we may think of it; it is only a child intellect yet. A hopeful child—it has done much already—it shows promise; and it will do far more in the future. Compared with the intellect of the Great Ones it is a very little child yet, therefore it cannot reach to these heights and depths; and so I, at least, am more than willing to admit quite frankly, I do not know what will be the end of the great evolutionary process. I do not know what the Supreme has in His mind. I know nothing about the Supreme except that He is.

Of the Solar Deity we know something more than that; we know something quite definite. We know His plan of evolution, we know it and we can see it, but of what lies beyond Him we know very, very little. We must presume that there is a Deity Who governs all the millions of solar systems, and acccording to this inference our system is very probably only one of many. There is evidence for both astronomer and occultist that other universes exist. Then, if they do, there is a God Who is supreme over all, above all, about Whom, remember, we know nothing. He is—He must be—that is all we can say. Never mind. Of the Solar Deity who is nearer to us, of Whose Solar System we are a part, from Whom we have come forth, we know something more. The metaphysician and the philosopher speculate on these things. Those who love such speculations do no harm in indulging in them, but I think they should clearly understand that they are speculations. I think that the philosopher should not develop his speculations into a system and expect us to accept it, for in such speculations we might quite likely be leaving out of account all the most important factors. Therefore for myself I do not even speculate, but at least the splendour and the glory that do unquestionably lie before us are far more than sufficient to satisfy all the aspirations that any human being could possibly imagine, and far more. That much we have seen, and to that much we can bear testimony. We can

tell you that many of these things are proved to our own knowledge, and that beyond and above that we see that others must be proved, much that as yet we have been unable to reach, so that the splendour of the future before you is not in doubt. What in the far, far ultimate of it all may come, that we cannot tell you ; but be content, there is infinitely more than you can imagine. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." And that is true now just as it was two thousand years ago.

III

December 22, 1914.

YOU will remember that I was speaking to you on our President's preface. We had come as far as where she says that the teachings contained in this book were given to Alcyone by his Master in preparing him for Initiation, and were written down by him from memory slowly and laboriously, for his English at that time was less fluent than it is now.

There was at one time a good deal of doubt thrown upon the authorship of this book. At the time of the attack made upon our President through the law-courts, one of the points which the opposition tried to make against her was that this book was not really written by Alcyone, as had been said. The judge declined to take any notice of the charge, because in any case the preface begins with the words: "These are not my words, but the words of the Master." He said: "It is useless for you to make any pretence on the matter; it is obvious that he is merely repeating what he has heard." But an endeavour was made to discount the whole thing on

the theory that it was impossible for the boy to have written it; therefore it is perhaps as well that I should bear testimony to it—to the fact that I know he did—that I myself saw, as did our President, the scraps of paper, exercise-books and so on, on which these sentences were written each morning. It was, as I said to you before, some considerable time after their being so written down morning after morning, over a period of five months or so, that this book was issued, and in the meantime a good deal of what is said in it had been quoted at various meetings of the Inner School. I, myself, for example, having heard all these teachings given, had on several occasions used part of it when speaking to the members of our Section Meetings at Adyar, saying always: "I have heard the Master say so-and-so". The fact that, in that way, some of these sentences first came to be known to the other members was used afterwards to suggest that it was not written down by Alcyone, but that these sentences which had been known beforehand were perhaps written by me or repeated by me; but that is how it happened and it is perhaps just as well that I should tell you exactly how it occurred. I had of course no idea at the time that these sentences would be published as a whole, and many of them were so beautiful that I quoted them at various meetings; but that did not mean, in the least, that the book itself was not written exactly as is here stated.

The President goes on to say that the greater part of the book is a repetition of his Master's own words, and then that whatever else there is which is not exactly the Master's own words is the Master's thought expressed in His pupil's words. There are a few cases of that; I shall draw your attention to them as we go on. Two omitted sentences were supplied by the Master, and in two other cases an omitted word has been added. "Beyond this, it is entirely Alcyone's own, his first gift to the world."

Continuing, the President says:

> May it help others as the spoken teaching helped him—such is the hope with which he gives it. But the teaching can only be fruitful if it is LIVED, as he has lived it since it fell from his Master's lips. If the example be followed as well as the precept, then for the reader, as for the writer, shall the great Portal swing open, and his feet be set on the Path.

This is our President's introduction to the book. You may possibly, some of you, remember that in a review published in *The Theosophist* she said: "Very rarely are such words as these given to men; teaching so direct, so philosophical, and so beautifully put." Therefore assuredly each word of the book is worth our very careful consideration. That is what we shall try to give it as we go through.

At the beginning of the book, before we enter upon even the foreword of Alcyone, is set the prayer to the Master which you all know very well. You will

see it written here first in Samskrit and then in English:

> From the unreal lead me to the Real.
> From darkness lead me to Light.
> From death lead me to Immortality.

I am not quite sure whether these words, hallowed though they are in all our minds by long use and association, may not sometimes be a little misleading: I mean the use of the word "Real" there. It is difficult to find a better one, and yet what the Hindu understands by that word is not quite, I think, what we understand. When we say "real" and "unreal" the idea conveyed to our minds is that one thing has a definite existence and the other has not; the unreal is to us purely imaginary. Now, that is not quite what the Hindu understands by this sentence. Perhaps we should go a little nearer to his meaning —at any rate we should approach his meaning from another side—if we said: "From the impermanent lead me to the Permanent." I have myself always rather objected to the statement that the physical plane, for example, is unreal. It is not unreal while it lasts, but it has not of course the same permanence as some of the higher planes. But even that, perhaps, is only relative, because so far as we know all manifestation is impermanent, and only the Unmanifested is absolutely and always the same. I am not sure that we actually know even that, but

at any rate that is always assumed. All manifestation, even that of the highest planes we know and higher even than that, will some day pass again into the changeless; and, if that is so, then the difference between what we commonly call the impermanent and those higher planes is only a matter of time, and of time which in comparison to eternity can be as nothing.

Then, also, the statement that the physical plane is unreal—that the astral plane and the mental plane are unreal also—often leads people into distinct philosophical errors. These planes are not unreal, while they last; they are not unreal at their own level. Here in your physical consciousness you see certain physical objects. They are perfectly real to you while you are on the physical plane, but, when your body falls asleep and you use your astral consciousness instead of the physical, then those objects are no longer visible to you. Because you have passed into a higher state of consciousness, they then appear to be invisible; you therefore say they are unreal. There is no reason for that statement. You are then able to see and sense astral objects and astral people; but when you are in the physical consciousness, for most of you those astral people and those astral objects do not exist, just as the physical ceases to exist for you when your consciousness is on the astral. Do you not see that those physical objects and those astral objects are there all

the time? They remain visible to those others whose consciousness is on those respective planes.

You have, I say, no right to class objects as unreal, because not the objects but *you* change. It does not seem to me logical. Also, we must not let ourselves be led astray by the very commonly held theory that matter is evil; matter is not evil. Matter is an expression of the Divine just as much as spirit. Matter and spirit are both one in Him; they are only two sides—two manifestations of Him. Matter often operates to hinder us in our progress. It is so used by us and so treated as to delay us on our way; therefore it is perhaps not unnatural that the idea should arise that it is evil; but it is not a philosophical idea. Remember, then, that the physical plane is just as real as the nirvanic and just as truly an expression of the Deity as the nirvanic, and do not form the idea that one of these things is real, and the other a mere dream or phantasmagoria. One is just as real as the other, but all manifestations are impermanent, so that what we are really asking here is that from the outer we may be led to the inner.

As a matter of fact, the prayer means just as much: "From the false lead me to the True," as "From the unreal lead me to the Real". True, permanent, real, these words seem to be all of them fit translation of the Samskrit, and so what we are asking is rather that from the outer, where the illusion is greater, we may be led to the inner, which is nearer

to the Absolute Truth. No doubt we ask also that we may be led to that absolute Truth, but that means to pass beyond manifestation—to pass into conditions of which we, after all, know absolutely nothing whatsoever. So do not let yourselves use words unphilosophically or unscientifically. The physical world is real enough. You are living in it, and you have to act as though it were real, although at the same time you must not forget that inner life, which is so infinitely more important. All your method of living should be according to that which is inner; yet you must nevertheless do your duty in this outer world precisely as though the whole thing bore the importance which most ordinary people think that it possesses. People have, as you know, by this theory of the unreality of the physical, been led into what seems to follow not unnaturally from such a theory—that since this is all unreal, it does not matter what you do in it. There is a considerable section of people in India who hold that view quite literally—the view that, since all this is immaterial and unimportant, then you may lead any sort of life you like and plunge into all kinds of excesses. "It is all unreal, after all, and so it does not matter." That is a very dangerous doctrine, and one that would lead you very far from the true path of the Occultist.

Then your second petition is: "From darkness lead me to Light." That is of course from the

darkness of ignorance lead me to the light of knowledge. This prayer is addressed to the Master. You ask Him, by His teaching, to lead you from ignorance to knowledge—to enlighten you by His wisdom. There is also a secondary meaning attached to that in India, for in these words you are also supposed to be asking Him to lead you to the knowledge of the higher planes, and there comes in a rather beautiful thought which you will find in some of those old books, that the light of the lower plane is the darkness of the plane above. That is a very beautiful thought, and it is wonderfully true. What you think of here as light is dim and murky compared even to the light of the astral world, and that in turn is poor as compared to that of the mental. It is very difficult to put these distinctions into words, because, each time you rise one plane in your consciousness, you get the impression of something quite incalculably greater than you have ever known before ; greater light, greater power, greater bliss ; so much so, that each time a man has a definite advance in consciousness he thinks : " Now, for the first time, I know what life really means, what bliss is." But little as he can understand that at the time, it is equally true that, when he progresses to the next plane, he will have precisely the same feeling over again and realise that, until now, he has never known how splendid life could be.

So each plane is quite out of all proportion, infinitely superior to the one below it. That is an experience that you will all have as your consciousness rises from plane to plane. You will find the astral life in many ways so superior to the physical that to return even from that—the very next plane—into the physical is like coming out of the sunlight into a dark dungeon. When you can function consciously on the mental you will find an expansion in many directions far beyond anything which you know on the astral. When you can touch the buddhic consciousness for the first time, you begin to feel, in some little measure, how God sees things, for you are coming then into touch with Divinity; you are beginning to know how He, Who is all, feels through all. It is said that "in Him we live and move and have our being," and that "of Him and by Him and through Him are all things"; and all this is not merely a beautiful and poetic expression; it represents an actual fact. But above even the Buddhic plane there is a world of glorious unity—not brotherhood alone, but actual unity—and when you can touch the lowest fringe of that, you begin for the first time very dimly to understand how God feels when He looks upon His universe and says: "It is Good." And so you see, from the darkness of the lower planes you ask to be led to the higher consciousness; and it is light as compared with darkness. No phraseology could be more apt—

no expression could give exactly what one feels at those levels.

Then you say: " From death lead me to Immortality." That does not mean what at the first flush the ordinary person would take it to mean, because our attitude towards death should be very different indeed from that of the outsider; quite the reverse, in fact. Death is not to us a horror, not to us a king of terror, but rather an angel bearing a golden key to open the door into a higher and a fuller life. That being so, we cannot be expected to regard it with the fear which others have for it. Of course, we also regret those who pass away; regret, I mean, " the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still ". We, also, suffer when those whom we love pass from us; but it is not, it cannot be, for us at all the same as for those who have not grasped the truth concerning death. And so, when we ask to be led from death to Immortality, we do not at all mean what a non-Theosophical Christian might mean—namely, that he will live to all eternity in his present personality. We do not mean that at all; yet we have, however, a very definite wish to escape death, and not only from death, but also its concomitant, its inseparable companion, birth—that weary round of birth and death, death and birth, which the Buddhist calls the *Samsara*, the wheel of life. The prayer here is for delivery from this " wheel of return ". " Lead us to immortality, the life which

lies above birth and death"—the life which no longer needs to dip into matter because it has gained all that matter can teach it. That it is for which we ask.

Although people never seem to see it, you will find that very prominent in the Christian Scriptures also. Modern Christianity suffers from certain obsessions—I do not think we can call them by any other name—and one of them is the terrible idea of an everlasting hell. The fact that they believe, or profess to believe, in this everlasting hell casts a cloud of misunderstanding over a number of other doctrines too.

The whole theory of salvation has come to mean salvation from this non-existent everlasting hell, whereas it does not mean that at all, and all the passages which are supposed to refer to that, which are so incomprehensible when thus read, become clear and luminous when you understand what that really is from which the birth of the Christ in the heart saves man. And so also with the other idea of the everlasting heaven which is supposed to be the reward of the good. That too has cast misunderstanding over many of the sayings of the Christ. You know how often He spoke to the people of the broad road which led to death or destruction, and the many who followed it. His disciples came to Him once and said: "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Then He said: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life; and few there be that find

it." Now actually they have taken these words—very beautiful and perfectly true—as meaning that the majority of mankind will be cast into everlasting hell, and that very few indeed will succeed in attaining heaven by superhuman exertions of some kind or other. But it is absolutely ridiculous to attribute that idea to the Christ. What He meant was perfectly clear; He was answering their question, and He said: "Very few," meaning that very few would enter the stream and reach the Path of Initiation—which is true at this stage of the world's history, as it was at that time.

He said: "Broad is the road that leads to death, and many there be that follow it"; what He meant was the road that leads to the repeated cycle of death and birth and death and birth, over and over again. Of course it is true that that road is broad and easy, easy enough. There is no trouble at all about following that line of development, and those who follow it will attain one day and will attain easily, somewhere about the end of the Seventh Round, I suppose. It is very true that the road is broad and easy, but strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to Initiation. For it is Initiation which is meant by "the kingdom of heaven". Remember that when the Christ speaks of the kingdom of heaven He never means the heaven-world—devachan, the state after death—He means always the body of the saved, of the elect, that is to say, the Great Brotherhood.

That is the kingdom of heaven, the company of the elect. "Difficult," He says, "is the way that leads to that, and few there be that follow it." When He is really speaking of the heaven-world, or rather, when one of His apostles speaks in the Scriptures of the conditions after death, then you get a different set of words. Remember the great passage written by S. John: "And lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands". . . When they spoke of that condition, they spoke of a vast multitude no man could number—not of a few who found their way with difficulty. You will see, from all this, that there is some interest in this text which is put for us at the very beginning of the book.

We now come to the Foreword of Alcyone himself. He says:

> These are not my words; they are the words of the Master who taught me. Without Him I could have done nothing; but through His help I have set my feet upon the Path.

You see how plainly he attributes all progress to the influence and the help of His Master. "Without Him," he says, "I could have done nothing, but through His help I have been able to succeed"; only remember, that help is ready and waiting for every one of us too. I said to you, a fortnight ago, in the

first of these addresses: "When the pupil is ready, the Master is ready also." Let that sink into your minds as a reality, as an absolutely certain fact. When we are ready, He is ready; therefore, whenever there is any delay, it must be on our side that the difficulty lies, never on Theirs. So just as Alcyone was helped, so will you be helped when you choose to make yourself ready for it.

He goes on:

> You also desire to enter the same Path, so that the words which He spoke to me will help you also, if you will obey them. It is not enough to say that they are true and beautiful; a man who wishes to succeed must do exactly what is said.

Well, you have all heard that times without number, but somehow it does not sink in. It is very difficult to make people realise that in Occultism we mean exactly what we say. We are not talking pious generalities.

He says:

> To look at food and say that it is good will not satisfy a starving man; he must put forth his hand and eat. So to hear the Master's words is not enough; you must do what He says, attending to every word, taking every hint. If a hint is not taken, if a word is missed, it is lost for ever; for He does not speak twice.

Take every hint—that is a very important thing to remember. You must attend to every word and you must take every hint; you must be on the watch. That is to say, it is not enough to say: "I will do all that is written in the books." It would be very good thing

if you could do even that, but it is not enough. You must be on the watch for opportunities. There is a little bit of poetry, a couple of verses at the end of this book which express that idea:

> Waiting the word of the Master,
> Watching the Hidden Light;
> Listening to catch His orders
> In the very midst of the fight;
>
> Seeing His slightest signal
> Across the heads of the throng;
> Hearing His faintest whisper
> Above earth's loudest song.

Listening in spite of all the noise, the whirl of excitement of the fight of life, that is the attitude in which every one ought to be who aspires to become a pupil of our Masters; you ought already to be eagerly looking out for opportunities to put into practice any of the teachings. It is not, after all, difficult; it is largely a matter of habit. If you get yourselves into that attitude, it will soon come easily to you. The difficulty lies in the first step; *c'est le premier pas qui coûte*, it is the first step that costs, that is difficult. When you have taken that, when you have set up the habit, then it is just as easy to be watching for this as it is for the business man to be looking for opportunities to make money. That is quite right for the business man, for we must remember that while he is engaged in business it is his duty to do it well. But if he can be eager about the temporary things, surely we might well be

equally eager about these things which are so much more real and permanent.

I think, really, that the great requirement is to have it certain in one's mind that these things are more real and permanent and important. The average Christian, as you know, certainly says that the unseen things are more important, that that which is seen is temporary, while that which is unseen is eternal, and so on, but he does not act at all as though he believed it. Why? Because he is not sure of it; he is quite sure on the physical plane that money would be a good thing and that the more he can get of it the better it will be for him, but he is not equally sure that the spiritual things are real. It is all a little vague to him. It belongs to the group of subjects which he labels "religion" and there is not, somehow, the certainty and the practicality and the matter-of-factness about these, for his mind, that there is in the affairs of ordinary life. Now, somehow or other, we who are Theosophists must introduce precisely this matter-of-factness, this absolute and definite certainty, into the realms of the unseen; we must get to believe these things to be real. You remember Mr. Sinnett's expression in the first book he ever wrote, that "These things must be as real to you as Charing Cross"; that is true; they must be to you as familiar as the things you see every day, but they must be to you the one reality; yet to many of you they are not. Of course, I know it can

become an absolute fact to a man only when he has some sort of direct experience. Well, perhaps it is not quite true that it is the only way, because you can so convince yourself intellectually that a thing must be so, that it grows into a fact for you.

I think somtimes that this is one of the advantages which we, who are older members, have over those who have joined our ranks more recently. We have had time to live into this thing and to take it bit by bit—to make it, so to speak, part of ourselves, and I do think that the simple passage of time helps us very definitely to do this. For after a certain length of time we cannot imagine ourselves apart from it, and so "knowledge grows from more to more". We grow into it because we live into it. Some come in at the last moment, as it were, and by happy intuition, which is really by good karma won in past lives, spring right into this absolute certainty at once; but for most of us, whose karma has not been quite so good as that, I do think that the steady growth tells very much. Of course I know that a member may be a member of the Society for thirty years and know no more at the end of the time than at the beginning. That is sad because it is a waste of opportunity; but for many of us, who have lived into the thing so that it has become a part of us, that gives us a feeling of certainty which has gradually grown with us.

Gradually proof after proof has accumulated for us. Yet there are many of us who, without such proofs,

are fully convinced that all these things must be true. So there can be intellectual, apart from direct, proof. Easier and more rapid, of course, is the path of the man who gets some fragment of personal experience; few of us are entirely without that, and even one little bit of direct knowledge of that sort shows us not, perhaps, that all the rest is true, but that all the rest is eminently probable; for, having seen one statement confirmed, we assume that the rest is also probably true. The probability is so strong that it becomes for us practically a certainty.

Now this earlier stage in which we find ourselves at the present day has often been called the Probationary Path.

But I think it is, on the whole, better to avoid the term "Probationary Path" because it is misleading. We really do not enter the Path at all until we gain the First Initiation. Up to that period we are still in the Outer Court of the Temple, preparing ourselves for that time which is to come. One step in such preparation is that a man, if he be fortunate, may attract the attention of one of our Masters and be accepted by Him as a pupil on probation; that is really the true use of the word, he is on trial. The words "Probationary Path" are perhaps hardly so well chosen or so appropriate, because the man is not upon trial at all; he is simply reading up for an examination, as it were. He has realised that there is an Initiation to be taken, and he

is trying to prepare himself for it, but he is not in any sense of the word on probation or trial.

They used to give us Five Stages on this Probationary Path; four of them agreeing with the four Qualifications about which this book is written: Discrimination, Desirelessness, Good Conduct and Love. But it is not fair to speak of those as stages on a path because we do not, as you all know as a matter of daily experience, first develop one of those and then, having finished with that, turn our attention to another. On the contrary, every one of us is trying to develop all these Qualifications simultaneously. We do what we can with all of them, and to some of us one Qualification may be very much easier than it is to others. It is not fair to call those stages on the Path, nor is it at all correct to speak of such stages as being separated by anything like Initiation; one does not pass from one to another.

The Fifth Stage was that called by a Samskrit word which means the "man who is absolutely fit and ready"; one, that is to say, who, after having developed the four Qualifications fairly fully, has then became fit for Initiation and is simply waiting for the time when it will be convenient for it to be given to him. It is perhaps as well that we should not use the term "Probationary Path" in general conversation because it is liable to lead to confusion. Remember that we develop any and all of these Qualifications as best as we can,

and that, when we have them all in fair measure, we are ready for the next step—the great step, the First Initiation. I shall speak to you, when we next meet, of the various ways in which a man is led up to that.

IV

January 5, 1915.

A fortnight ago we were just at the last sentence of the Foreword. You will remember Alcyone had said:

> To hear the Master's words is not enough; you must do what He says, attending to every word, taking every hint. If a hint is not taken, if a word is missed, it is lost for ever; for He does not speak twice.

The last expression is worth your attention. We who follow Him, and who try to do some of His work in the outer world, have to speak twice constantly; we have to say over and over again the various things which are committed to us, because people are heedless and do not pay careful attention to our words. But when you come into touch with the Master Himself, you are not expected to be heedless any more. Then a single hint should be sufficient, and certainly, if it is not taken, it will not be repeated. You will have to understand the method in which our Masters deal with Their pupils.

It is very rarely indeed that They issue any direct order. I can remember when I myself was first

taken on probation, my first question was: "Well! what can I do?" And the Master said in reply: "That is for you to discover." Then He explained: "I know quite well that, if I tell you to do anything, of course you will do it at once, but in that case you will have only the karma of prompt and instant obedience, while I shall have the karma of the deed. Now, I want you to have the karma of the deed too. I want you, for yourself, to do good things, and to make good karma. It must be you who originate the idea, not I." And so, as I say, They very rarely give direct commands; but very often, from something that a Master says, or even from the glance of His eye, one forms the opinion as to whether He approves or disapproves of a certain thing; and those who stand around Him, more especially in the case of the Master Kuthumi—or Koot Hoomi, as the Tibetans write it—learn very readily to note these things. They are always on the lookout for any sort of hint. The Master Morya, as I have told you, was a King in this incarnation and He speaks with the command of a King. Still, He more often gives direct orders, and, if He disapproves of something, He generally says so clearly. Our Master Koot Hoomi has very rarely expressed disapproval. A look from Him is more than a rebuke from most of the Others, and His pupils have learnt to interpret His look, for He very rarely says a word of blame. So it comes that we watch very carefully for anything whatsoever in the

nature of a hint. When it is given, we endeavour to take it because we know that, if we miss it, that particular hint will not be given again. You will understand that nothing could possibly follow in the nature of blame or loss from not taking it, except to ourselves. The probable consequence would be that we should be less likely to receive a hint on another occasion. Nothing more than that. Still that is quite enough for those of us who want to make progress; therefore we do try to watch for every glance—" to hear the faintest whisper," to take the slightest hint, because we know that He does not speak twice on the same subject. He gives a hint to His pupil; if the pupil will not take that, then he must find out for himself the necessity of what has been recommended. A suggestion has been made to him; well and good. If he is wise enough to take that, he saves himself much trouble. If he does not, then it is his own karma, and afterwards he will probably find that it would have been better for him if he had been a little more wide awake. So it is true that the Master does not speak twice, although of course we in the outer world have, as a general rule, to speak a great many times before we can get people to understand or to listen. That is the end of the Foreword proper.

We then come to the four Qualifications.

Four Qualifications there are for this pathway: Discrimination, Desirelessness, Good Conduct, Love.

Now you know these Qualifications have been stated over and over again in the various religions, but this translation differs slightly from any that has been given previously. In the case of the first one, Discrimination, however, there has been very little variation, I think. In the Samskrit it remains *Viveka*. In the Pali it is *Manodvaravajjana*, that is "the opening of the doors of the mind". It is the same thing as "conversion" in Christianity, the turning round from a worldly life and learning to appreciate the higher life—to distinguish between the real and the unreal. But in the teachings of the Lord Gautama Buddha, which preceded that of our present World Teacher, this was emphasised as the firm intellectual conviction of the worthlessness of all earthly aims. The man, that is to say, had arrived at the intellectual conviction that nothing which people usually value here on earth was really worth having, that the attempt to gain wealth, power and influence, was waste of time, that all these things were temporary, transitory, ephemeral, in fact, and that, because of this, only the higher, the spiritual and the more permanent things were really worth anything. It is very much what is expressed by the Apostle, when he says: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." That is what it comes to.

I remember that in the very early days of the Society, our Vice-President, Mr. Sinnett, put it as: "Giving allegiance to the Higher Self," or to the ego.

That is really, if you think of it, a very good way of putting it. He means that this personality is but a fragment of the ego put down to these lower levels in order to represent the ego here, to gather experience of various sorts, and to develop various qualities which can be gained only at these lower levels. As we know well from daily experience, this personality often rebels against the ego of which it is a part. It starts on its own account and on a line of which the ego, the man behind, cannot possibly approve. At that point in a man's career when he realises this fact—that he is the ego and that it is his business so to order the personality that it shall express the ego and nothing else—he has passed the turning point; he has "turned round" and is what is called converted. He has learned to set his affections on the higher things, and not on the things of earth.

Actually to succeed in the effort to make that lower personality nothing but an expression of the ego is quite another matter, but to recognise the necessity of doing it is the first step. When the man has really done it, when there is nothing left of the lower self, when it is but an expression, a reflection of the ego, then the man is ready for the First Initiation. Of course then he has to repeat the process as between the Monad and the ego. For, in exactly the same way, the ego is a fragment of the Monad put down as far as the higher part of the mental plane for the very same purpose—the collection of experience, the

reception of, and the learning to respond to, vibrations such as could not be sensed by the Monad at his own level. And so the ego in turn has to learn that he is a part of the Monad, that he exists only for that Monad; and when that in turn is fully realised, the man is ready to become an Adept, ready for the Fifth Initiation. Those are the actual definitions of readiness for the two Initiations; for the first one, that the higher and the lower self shall have been unified, that there shall be nothing but the ego working in this personality, and for the Fifth Initiation, that there shall be nothing but the Monad working, those are the necessary qualifications in the two cases. So that what is called in Christianity "conversion," in Buddhism is termed "the opening of the doors of the mind to understand," and in Hinduism, "Discrimination"; and this is held by all these religions to be the very first of the Qualifications. For us, who are Theosophists, it may be expressed as allegiance to the ego.

Now how are men brought to that stage of conversion or of allegiance? Well, they tell us in the Eastern books that there are four main roads by which men may be brought to that point. The Hindu books mention as the first and most helpful method the companionship of those already on the Path. Some of you know just exactly what that means. You know how the influence, for example, of our President acts upon her people. You know

how the companionship of such an one as she, who is already on that Path, brings others, makes them see its glory and its beauty and the necessity for following it. So that is the first and in many respects the best way. You will realise that the influence exerted by such an one who is upon the Path is not in any sort of way to be limited by the words which she speaks. It is the influence of the life, the influence of the vibrations radiating from such an one, that is so powerful. You will find that very fully recognised in India, for example. In that country there are a great number of teachers or Gurus, standing at various levels of advancement and power. Each has his own set of followers, he teaches them his own ideas upon philosophy and so on, but it is not by any means what he teaches which really does most for them. Sometimes he may give them a few mantras to recite, some kind of Yoga to practise, some form of meditation or some exercises, but it is not that which is the principal thing. The principal feature is that they shall be with the teacher; and that is why they always are with him; he has his little band of followers who live with him. If he is a peripatetic philosopher, as so many of them are, if he wanders from place to place, then this band of followers, of disciples, goes about with him, just as the disciples of Jesus travelled with Him through Palestine. If he lives in one place, these disciples gather round him, they sit at his feet, and they

listen to any words of wisdom which he may drop. But, as I tell you, it is always recognised that it is not so much what he teaches them which helps their development, as the influence of his presence.

Of course that is entirely scientific. You see, his aura—that is, his higher vehicles generally—is keyed up to a somewhat higher rate of vibration than those of his pupils. He is living presumably an entirely unworldly life (I am speaking of a man who is a real teacher), while they have come more recently than he out of the worldly life, so that their vibrations are still at a somewhat lower level. His mere proximity, therefore, acts upon their vehicles and helps them to vibrate at a rate similar to his own.

Yet the presence of a teacher cannot carry a man the whole way. To change the character is a very slow and tedious business, and yet it is a thing which must be done by every one who wishes to enter the Path, and every one must, in the last resort, do it for himself. He must take himself in hand. He must realise his faults and resolve to get rid of them ; and he must also develop certain virtues. In both these tasks, however, he can be immensely assisted by being in constant contact with someone who has developed these virtues or who has extinguished those vices. By living always in the aura of a less worldly man the pupils themselves become less worldly than they otherwise could. The pressure of the higher vibration is quite constant.

Whether they wake or whether they sleep, they are in close contact with it and are absorbing it. It is impressing itself upon them all the time. In ordinary physics you know that the stronger vibration will dominate the weaker. If you put two timepieces close together, and if they do not move regularly together in harmony, the stronger one will stop the weaker or bring it into agreement. It is just the same kind of thing which happens on the higher planes, and so it has always been recognised that the actual presence of the teacher counts for enormously more than the words he can say.

The second way is the hearing or reading of teachings upon the subject. Any man who goes into the subject gets hold of some teaching along these higher lines. It commends itself to his intuition, and immediately he seeks to satisfy his desire to find out more about it. I know I did. The moment I got hold of *The Occult World*, then and there I made up my mind, "If that be so—and it is so evidently—if there be these Greater People, and if They are willing to accept service from us, and to give us in return something of Their priceless knowledge—then I am going to be one of those who serve Them. I am going to pick up whatever crumbs I can, and the only thing worth doing from henceforth is to set to work to get into that position somehow." Well, I did, and I have never wavered from that decision since. That is thirty-two years ago now.

So you see one may arrive at this by the hearing or reading of teachings on the higher life. Of course there are many thousands who hear and read the teaching and yet do not receive any impulse from it. This is a question of previous karma, a question of the life that the man has lived in other lives before this. If he has already come into contact with the truth, if he has convinced himself of its beauty and reality in another life, then, when it comes before him in this life, he knows it is true. That is what happened to me. I felt inside myself that these things were true; therefore I resolved to find out everything I could about them. But there are many people on whom the same book would make no sort of impression. It is amazing to those of us who do grasp the truth and something of what it means and involves to see the obtuseness, the lack of comprehension, of other people with regard to the very same thing. But it is not the least use being annoyed with those people; it simply means that they are at that stage, that it is all foreign to them, and therefore does not awaken in them the response that it awakens in us.

It does seem to us amazing that any one who gets hold of a Theosophical book should not be converted. It is a most wonderful teaching and it solves a great many problems, and yet you know quite well that, when you try to lend Theosophical books to friends, half of them return them. They say: "Yes, no doubt it is very interesting," but they have not really

understood it at all, it has not penetrated the armour of their ignorance. The whole thing depends on whether or no we have the good karma of having understood it before; for the more you have known before, the more will you see in the thing now. You can test that for yourselves. Take a book, some Theosophical book, which made a great impression on you twenty years ago, read it again now, and see how very much more you will see in it than you did then. That marks the extent of your progress. Take the great Scriptures of the world. You read the Christian Bible in your childhood. Read some of it now, and you will find that you will understand it enormously better. Of course there are parts which you read which you will now reject altogether. But in many parts of it you will now see a vast amount of information; you will find that much of your Theosophical knowledge is reflected there. That is so with the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and it is so with all the Scriptures. It is, in fact, the case with any good book. You are able to see in it that which you bring with you the power to see.

Then the third method by which men can be brought to the beginning of the Path is that which is called in the Indian books " Enlightened Reflection ". This means that by sheer force of hard thinking a man may come to see that there must be a plan of evolution, that there must be those who know all about it, the evolved and the perfected Men, and

that there must be a Path by which they may be reached. And the man who by sheer hard thinking comes to that decision of course sets out to look for that Path and find his way to the Great Ones. Those who travel by that Path are probably few, but the thing is a possibility.

Perhaps in some ways the most remarkable is the fourth method, in which it is suggested that a man may attain to the commencement of the Path by the "practice of virtue". That is an idea which would quite commend itself to the average Christian, because his idea is that all that is necessary is to be good. But to the Theosophist it might give reason to pause, because we know very well that, in the early days of Christianity, that Purification—or the Saintship, which now they set before themselves as their goal—was only the first step. The early Christian teachers certainly held that it was a man's duty to become a saint; but at the same time they insisted that it was the first stage only, and S. Clement says, quite boldly, that purity, for example, is merely a negative virtue, valuable chiefly as a condition of insight. Pure of course you must be; good of course you must be; but that is only the first step. It is taken for granted. It is after you have learned to become a saint that illumination comes, and then you can begin to learn something; before that you are not even in the condition to learn. You are then fit for illumination and after that you pass into the

third stage of Purification—that of "perfection". You will remember how S. Paul uses that term. He speaks of preaching wisdom "to them that are perfect"; and he is not using the word "perfect" in any ordinary sense, as you might use it in conversation to-day. He means to those who have attained a certain level of occult progress. He uses the word, in this sense, over and over again. Compare: "We speak these things only to those who are perfect." To return to the "practice of virtue". When we find it said that by the mere practice of virtue you may presently arrive at the Path, you may wonder a little what that means; it seems going back to the old theory: "Be good and you will be happy." The explanation given is not quite so simple as that. It is rather as follows. Though the man who leads a good life through many incarnations may not thereby develop intellect, he will presently acquire sufficient intuition to carry him into the presence of the people who do know, to bring him in fact to the feet of someone who is a servant of the Master. But it is admitted that the method takes thousands of years and many lives. The man who practises virtue and does not do anything else will get there eventually, but it is a slow process. It would save him much time if he followed S. Peter's advice and added knowledge; for then his progress would be much swifter.

By one or other of these means, then, the man is led to this Discrimination, this knowledge of what is

worth following and what is not worth following. Then he finds he has to develop the second Qualification, to which our Master here gives the name of Desirelessness. Mrs. Besant, previously translating it, had called it Dispassion, or Indifference. This is the Hindu *Vairagya*, and does mean indifference to the result of one's actions. The Buddhist statement of it, however, is just a little different. Buddhism calls that second stage by the Pali word *Parikamma*, "preparing for action," the stage in which the man is learning to do right for right's sake, not for the sake of anything he may gain from it in any way, but just because the thing is the right thing to do. That is only another stage of Indifference—namely, indifference to the fruit of your action; but you must not, please, misunderstand that. Some people do. They say that indifference to the fruit of your action means that you must perform your duty without taking into account how it will affect any one else. Now that is right in one way and wrong in another. It is your duty to think of the effect of your action, not to act carelessly, but to try to see how what you do will affect other people. It is true that there are times when you must act independently of these considerations. As this book tells you later on: "That which is right you must do, that which is wrong you must not do," whatever the consequence may be. But this does not mean you shall go ahead doing just what you like without thinking how your action

will affect others. What is required is a careful balance—you must not think of the effect upon yourself, but you must think of the effect on others. It is indifference to the fruit of the action for yourself that comes to you; it does not mean indifference as to the result for other people.

The third Qualification, which is called Good Conduct, includes the rules which are called *Shatsampatti*. In the Pali form as given by the Lord Buddha, that Qualification is called *Upacaro*, and that means attention, rather than conduct; meaning that you are to pay attention to your conduct in the ways prescribed by those six "jewels," as they are called. We shall come to our Master's rendering of them presently as we go through this book. By the Buddha they were given as "Quietude," that is, control of mind. Then "Subjugation," that is, the control of the body; "Cessation," "Endurance," "Intentness" and "Faith". Those are a little different from the translations which are given here, further on in the book. What is here called Cessation is translated as Tolerance, but the Cessation meant is cessation of bigotry and of superstition, the putting aside altogether of any idea that your way is better than anybody else's way; the idea that any rite or ceremony is necessary. It is cessation of that kind of thing which is meant. Then of course Endurance, that is simply cheerfulness in another form, while the

Intentness is one-pointedness and the Faith is confidence in one's Master and one's Self. When we come to these we will note more in detail the differences in the statements of the Lord Gautama and the Lord Maitreya. It does not mean that They differ as to Qualifications, but the way in which they are translated or stated. One looks always from the point of view of the necessity of Wisdom, and the other is looking always from the point of view of the necessity of Love; so that the last Qualification is called " Love " in this book. It is really in Samskrit *Mumukshatva*, which means " the intense desire for liberation from the round of birth and death and for union with the Supreme," with God.

The Lord Buddha in His scheme calls that *Anuloma*, which means "direct order of classification". What He means by that is that, when the man has developed the other Qualifications in direct order and sequence, after that development he must desire to escape from the lower limitations and to become one with the Supreme, in order that he may help. So you see, you get these rather different aspects of the Qualifications.

As you probably heard me tell the general public, when I was speaking about it the other night, this book is of the very greatest importance to us, because we know it represents exactly the point of view of the World Teacher Himself. He designed this book; He said it was to go out to the world. It may be

taken, therefore, as expressing His opinion, as it were, His statement of the truth, and is thus, at the present time, of the greatest interest to us.

Alcyone then goes on to say, "What the Master has said to me on each of these, I shall try to tell you," and then begins the book proper:

> The first of these Qualifications is Discrimination; and this is usually taken as the discrimination between the real and the unreal which leads men to enter the Path.

That, you see, is what I have been saying: "It is this," He says, "but it is also much more, and it is to be practised not only at the beginning of the Path, but at every step of it, every day until the end." Now that is precisely the difficulty which stands in the way of most people—people like ourselves, who do understand these things, who do see the glory and the beauty of it, and intend to enter upon that Path and to come to the Feet of the Master. That difficulty is the necessity of dull, steady, continuous plodding, of keeping on at the thing. Anybody can make a great effort for a moment. But to go on day after day doing the right thing and not the wrong thing in all the wearisome annoying duties of everyday life, that is the hard thing. It is much harder to do that than to be a martyr once for all . . . You could be scraped to death with oyster shells like Hypatia. Many of us could go through one of those tremendous sacrifices; but to go on day by day living the same old life, but living it in

a new way, is a much bigger task. You have tried it, I suppose, and you know it is not an easy thing, it is a most difficult thing; still it has to be done, it has to be faced. Of course we are making a special effort; it is well you should never forget that. This is a little past the middle of the Fourth Round and we are trying to do now that which will be very easy to do at the end of the Seventh Round. Those who go on to that time will have in their vehicles matter far more fully developed than we have now, in every vehicle—physical, astral and mental—matter with all its spirillæ in activity instead of only about half. Moreover, all the forces surrounding them will be helpful and not hindering as they are now.

The vast majority of people in the world do not know anything about the Path. Public opinion is overwhelmingly against us. Ninety-nine people out of a hundred now are fighting against us. The Masters are on our side and Their force helps us; the force of Evolution is on our side and the future is with us; but the present is a very hard time to do anything of this sort. In the Seventh Round all the people who are making trouble (not wicked people—I do not mean that at all—but simply people whose influence is bearing hard against us in an opposite direction) will have been shunted out in the middle of the Fifth Round, and there will be none left but those who are going our way. In the Seventh Round,

things will be wonderfully easy. Some people might think, why should we not wait for the Seventh Round? It is a long way, you know, and in the meantime what should you be doing? Drifting along comfortably and happily enough probably, as you have been doing for the last twenty or thirty thousand years. From the lives of Alcyone you will find that you were not pirates or ruffians in those distant ages; on the contrary you were all most respectable people. Why then did you not get on faster? Indifference; you did not try hard enough, or you did not try in the right way. Then you can go on for another million years or so on just the same old lines and no doubt it will be very much easier in the end. But those who go through the difficulty now will have the privilege, the enormous privilege, of helping in evolution, and they will wear the crown of the helper. Remember the old Christian hymn which tells how a man went to heaven, and looking all round him, found himself somehow different from all the rest and wondered what was the matter. At last he met the Christ and asked Him why this was so, and the Christ said in reply:

> I know thou hast believed on Me
> And light through Me is thine,
> But where are all those glorious stars
> Which in thy crown should shine?
> Thou seest yonder joyous throng
> With gems on every brow,
> For every soul they led to Me
> They wear a jewel now.

You remember, perhaps, that in your Christian Scriptures it is said: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament," as the light of the clear sky; but they "that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever," great glowing suns sending out light and heat and strength to thousands and thousands of other lives. That is the difference between doing the work now, and waiting to drift in with the current in the Seventh Round.

V

January 12, 1915.

We had reached to about the foot of the first page; you remember how it was said that Discrimination was " to be practised not only at the beginning of the Path, but at every step of it every day until the end ". We were speaking about the difficulty of that. Then it goes on:

> You enter the Path, because you have learned that on it alone can be found those things which are worth gaining. Men who do not know work to gain wealth and power, but these are at most for one life only, and therefore unreal.

You will remember that we said " unreal " had to be taken very much in the sense of " impermanent ".

> There are greater things than these—things which are real and lasting; when you have once seen these, you desire those others no more.

That, of course, has to be taken literally. It is a fact that, when you have once seen the greater things, you have no longer the taste for the lower things; but it must be absolutely that fact which induces you to refrain from following them. Very often people seem to confound cause and effect, and they think that to pretend not to care for these things—which

though quite good in their way we call "lower" things in contradistinction to "higher" and spiritual things—at once puts a man on a high level. Now of course it does not. You have another form of the same delusion which is very common with regard to asceticism. A great many people follow what they call asceticism as an end in itself, and they think that to avoid all the ordinary pleasures of life, to make oneself uncomfortable in various ways, is highly meritorious. Now it is not in the very least meritorious, and we have to fight against that idea, because it is a relic of the Puritan idea which at one time dominated England and a good deal of Europe. Puritanism held that, to be good, you must be as uncomfortable as possible. Whenever you were in any sort of way happy, you were surely infringing some of the divine laws; you were not in the least meant to be happy down here; your body was a vile thing which had to be repressed in all sorts of ways, and, if at any time it delighted in any thing you were doing, you might be certain that thing was wrong. That is all nonsense, but it does come from a perversion of the truth; and the truth is that those things which most people in the world enjoy and regard as great pleasures cease to be thought of as pleasures by the man who, rising to a higher level, has altogether higher pleasures within his reach, which far more than take their place.

People in the world take great pleasure in all sorts of things which would not interest you—in horse-racing and drinking and gambling, and in various forms of amusements which are not necessarily harmful, such as dancing and card-playing. All these are perfectly harmless things in their way, but they are rather like children's toys; and just as a child grows up and finds that he abandons his toys, so have you abandoned these.

A little child of three or four likes to play with bricks and dolls, and things like that. When he gets a little older he takes to playing with toy soldiers, marbles and such things. When he gets again a little bit older he cares nothing for these, but he plays cricket or football or some game of that sort which requires a great deal of out-of-door exertion. Now, all are stages through which the child passes, and each is quite proper for its stage. But as he grows older he abandons those things he had previously enjoyed; not for any special reason, or because he thinks he ought to do so, but simply because those things have ceased to interest him and he has found something which is more appropriate to his stage of development. And you can see at once that a little child of three would not become a big boy just because he chose to ignore all the things of childhood and wanted to play cricket or football. First of all he could not do it and secondly, even if he did, that would not make him a big boy. It is exactly the same with all these

other things. It is true that many of these pleasures of the ordinary world are quite harmless in themselves, but they are no longer pleasures to a man who has been studying Theosophy for many years, because he has come into touch with higher worlds. He knows of things which are so much greater, so much more real, that he does not care about those things any more. They become rather a bore; so he naturally drops them. But do you not see that a person does not become a learned Theosophist merely because he chooses to drop those things and pretend to greater knowledge? In the same way the highly advanced man does not care for a great many things ordinary people think necessary, and I suppose you would (no, not you, the ordinary man of the world would) probably call the life of the disciple an intolerably wearisome life; that is to say, if he lived, as many of us live, with no real interest outside Theosophy, nothing else we care to talk about half so much as Theosophy, no subject which interests us so much, so that we would rather take a new Theosophical book and study it than take up a new book or novel, or anything of the sort.

You can easily see that the average worldling (using the word in no disparaging sense), would say that you are always doing the one thing, and do not seem to know or care for anything else. And that would be perfectly true; and it is true because this one thing includes all the rest. You can see also

that the worldling would not become an advanced man if he pretended not to care, while all the time he cared in his heart. One gives up these things just because one has learned that the only things worth gaining are to be found on the other path. Those who do not know, as it is said here, work for what exists for one life only; but when you have once seen the real things you are filled with a single desire, the desire to work for the Logos, the desire to fall in with that mighty plan and help in however small a way to carry it out.

You see, He emphasises this matter very much. He says:

> In all the world there are only two kinds of people—those who know, and those who do not know; and this knowledge is the thing which matters. What religion a man holds, to what race he belongs—these things are not important.

Yet those are the very things about which people make so much fuss, and to which they attach so much importance. He says those things are not important at all. You will realise of how little real importance they are if you remember that we all of us pass through different races in turn. You find yourself now in a particular sub-race of a particular root-race. Why? Because that is the stage of evolution which you happen to have reached. You are put in that race to acquire the best qualities of it, whatever they may be. As a matter of fact, although we acquire to some extent those good qualities, we generally

employ most of our time in developing the weaknesses of that particular sub-race. That is not what is meant at all. It is not intended that you should take up English methods and glorify them to the exclusion of all others, and say none can be so good as those. You would probably be quite right if you said: "No other would be so suitable for me just now." That is probably true, and that is why you are in that particular race; but you may be very sure of this fact—that you are there to develop its good qualities, not to take up the defects of those qualities and the failings which often accompany them.

Each nation, as you know, has its own special advantages; but there is no doubt also that each nation has its special failings, to which its people are somewhat more prone than those of other nations. One should study one's own race, but with a view to guarding oneself against the weaknesses which are most prevalent, and to developing the good qualities. It would be a very great mistake to be proud of your race in the sense of regarding it as the only good one in the world. No race is that. We most of us are proud of our connection with the great Anglo-Saxon race. Well, it is a great race, and it has had and has still a great work to do in the world. If it is permissible to feel proud of it and of our connection with it, then this can be only in so far as it is doing that work which is given to it to do.

Any of you who know the real life of England—of London, or of any other great city—know very well there is a vast amount in that life of which no one could be proud—which brings us great regret, great sorrow, that it should be there; but on the other hand there are certain great achievements of the race to which we look back with pleasure. That has always been so, but remember there have been similar great facts in the history of other nations, and that each race is born for a special purpose; each race has its part to play, its qualities to develop, and each helps to build up the whole of the mighty piece which is being played. Then, if you happen to be in that particular race, that part in the Drama which is played by that race is for the moment the easiest and most natural work for you. It may be that you pass through that and learn to play some other part later, but at least the reason of your being born there is that you require the kind of development which that race can give. It is not because that race is the best or the worst in the world, but because it has certain characteristics which you require. Now you may well (being in that race) make the best of it. You are quite right to be patriotic with regard to it, and to feel that you owe something to it; but, if you admire your own race, take great care lest you show your admiration by depreciating the others, because that is not well. You have, of course,

certain points in which your race is superior to the others, but you will find others in which they are superior to yours, if you look for them. Therefore, as I say, pride of race is very often a foolish pride. You are there not because you possess all the best qualities, but because you need them. Do you not see? You may be glad to belong to a certain race; yes, but let that enjoyment be tempered by the knowledge that in your last incarnation you belonged to some other, and in your next incarnation also you will certainly belong to some other. Therefore your permanent relation is that of a citizen of the world, and not of any particular race.

Patriotism is good just as family love is good; but in all these relations you must remember that there are temporary and that there are wider things, and so, whilst you must take what is good in them, you must not let yourself carry them to such extreme as to put evil in the place of good.

Truly family affection is a very good thing, but the family affection of the robber barons of the Middle Ages, which led them to murder other people for the sake of enriching their own families, was certainly a virtue carried to an excess and become a vice.

Now in exactly the same way your patriotism for a particular race is a good thing, but if it leads you into aggression against other races, not the patriotism, but the method of its expression, becomes a bad thing. Merely to be proud of belonging to a race,—well, it

is a pride based on something which is not very large. If you yourself can do something for that race, if you can show yourself to be a worthy member of it so that it shall be the better for your passing through it, you may then have something to be proud of—something at least at which you can look with satisfaction. Merely to be proud because you are an Englishman, or a Hindu, or a German, or whatever you may be—that in itself is a poor reason for pride. Show yourself worthy to belong to a great race, then you will have something personal to be proud of.

And so the fact which you find emphasised on the next page that the race does not matter is a very important thing—a thing to be borne in mind.

> The really important thing is the knowledge of God's plan for men. For God has a plan, and that plan is evolution. When once a man has seen that and really knows it, he cannot help working for it and making himself one with it, because it is so glorious, so beautiful.

You attach yourself to certain causes in this world because they impress you with their utility and importance. You take up, perhaps, the cause of temperance. Why? Because you have seen the tremendous evil caused by the drink habit, because you realise in how very many ways the world would be infinitely better if that evil could be repressed. Just in the same way people take up other causes, people, for example, who have seen the really awful suffering of the submerged tenth. They

seek wildly in all directions for a remedy for this great and crying shame, and some think they have found it in extreme radicalism, in anarchism, in all sorts of strange and abnormal ways. Having found what they think to be a remedy they attach themselves to that cause and prosecute it unselfishly. One cannot blame them for pursuing unselfishly a line which they think will bring relief to their fellows. Of course discrimination is often very sadly lacking because they see only one side of the difficulty, and so they plunge themselves into something which will lead to worse troubles than that which they are trying to assuage. That often happens. It is their heads which are at fault, their discrimination—not their hearts. Their hearts, after all, desire to do something, often at a great personal loss and sacrifice, to relieve the trouble of their fellow-men. One learns to be very charitable when one understands all these things. The very same spirit which makes men join temperance and political associations of various sorts, which they think will help the world—that very same spirit is called forth in its highest aspect the moment man sees the real plan of the Logos for His system. He sees at once how perfect everything would be if it could be carried out, and he sees furthermore that it will be carried out one day, and that the time it will take for that desirable consummation to be reached depends upon the number of people who are ready

to work for its fulfilment. The plan will be worked out—there is no shadow of question as to that—but how soon it can be done depends upon the number of people who see it and are willing to co-operate in it. If the whole world could be induced to see and co-operate with it, in a few days, a few weeks, a few years, everything that the Logos desires for His people would be very rapidly achieved. It is just because men are not yet able to see, not sufficiently developed to see, that we fall short so sadly; and so many sorrows and wrongs and wickednesses remain in the face of the sun. So when a man catches sight of this plan, he throws himself into it with enthusiasm.

You, in Theosophy, do know something of this plan. I do not say you have seen it yet, but you have been in contact with those who have seen it, and you know therefore what it is, and in what direction you must move if you wish to associate yourself with it. But nevertheless, when the time of absolutely seeing the thing comes, then you will find that all that is said here of your enthusiasm is true. What is said here by the Master is that the great thing is to be on God's side:

> So, because he knows, he is on God's side, standing for good and resisting evil, working for evolution and not for selfishness.

You see that is the touchstone by which you may recognise the people who know—not in the

least their religion or their race, but the one and only fact that they stand for God and resist evil; that they are working for evolution and not for selfishness. Wherever you find a man who is doing that, there is a man who is on God's side and he is a brother, although he may be doing his work in ways we cannot approve. He may be shortsighted, he may be very much lacking in discrimination; but, if he is working unselfishly for the good of others, if he is standing for what seems to him to be good and resisting what seems to him to be evil, so far he is loyal to the highest that he knows; and we must admit he is working on God's side, even though, perhaps, some of the work he does is hardly such as we could think of as being pleasant to God.

You have seen—at least I have—numbers of people who are utterly good and loyal to their convictions and yet have most crushing limitations; good, earnest, devoted creatures who would actually sacrifice their lives, their whole time, to bring other souls to Christ as they would put it, and yet who have the most limited and bigoted conceptions. They have in some cases a feeling amounting to bitter opposition, practically hatred, towards those whose belief is very little different in many ways from their own. Well, as I have often said to you before, one of the most striking factors about the work of the Great Hierarchy is that, in every such case, They extract the good and put aside the evil. They take up the force

which that devotion and that earnestness generates and They use it—every ounce of it—putting aside all the evil—which, in this world at any rate, so largely prevents that good from showing itself.

You know there are many of these Christian communities where the bigotry so overshadows the loving-kindness that all the impression you get is of bitter bigotry. Yes, the impression you get—but that is not the way in which the Hierarchy looks at it. They deplore the bigotry just as much as you do. They see the evil done by it more clearly than we can see it; but, nevertheless, out of all that, They extract the force of loving-kindness, of devotion, of good intention; They utilise the whole of that force, and, so to speak, give credit to those who pour it out, so that every one of those people will get all the good karma that results from his goodness and loving-kindness, although at the same time, for his anger and his bigotry, there will also be exactly the due result which would follow naturally. But the good and the evil do not cancel one another in the world of thought in the same way as they so often do down here. A man shows this tremendous bigotry; he does a great deal of harm, and because of that harm, because of that attitude, people do not give him credit for the good which lies behind. So far as the outer world is concerned the good of that is very much lost. But that is not so on the inner planes. He will reap the result of all his ill-natured remarks—of his ill-considered abuse—that is true, but also he

will get the full result of the devotion which has been so much hampered by these other feelings. Wherefore it behoves us to be charitable in dealing with these other people and to try, so far as may be, in all cases, to fix our thought upon the good things. "Pounce upon the pearls," as the Master said. "In your criticism pounce upon the pearls instead of everlastingly flying at the flaws," as so many other people do. So that then is the one important thing. If a man is on God's side, he is one of us. You see how the Master put it:

> If he is on God's side he is one of us, and it does not matter in the least whether he calls himself a Hindu or a Buddhist, a Christian or a Muhammadan, whether he is an Indian or an Englishman, a Chinaman or a Russian. Those who are on His side know why they are here and what they should do, and they are trying to do it; all the others do not yet know what they should do, and so they often act foolishly.

You see, there again is a touch of the teaching of His predecessor, the great Lord Gautama, that all evil comes from ignorance. Those who do not know often act foolishly. There is the fundamental fact which makes it true that the wicked man is always a man to be pitied because he is acting in ignorance. The fact that impresses itself most upon one is generally that he is acting in selfishness—that he is acting for his own interests, as he thinks. This tends to make us forget his ignorance of the facts. Take the case of those great millionaires whom you

hear of over in America, who win their way to temporary prosperity by simply destroying a number of weaker men, beggaring them and throwing them out of business. They are regarded with execration by those people whose livelihood they have taken away, and everyone says how utterly selfish—how brutal these people are. Yes, but they are so because they are ignorant. Such a millionaire is doing exactly what he has set out to do. He has set out to crush these other people because he thinks that he can do that business better—that he can turn out better results, that he is going to make a fortune for himself by doing it. He would never have set out to do that, if he had known that he was doing himself far more harm than he did to any of those other men; that he was making for himself a karma in the future that would be infinitely worse than that of the people whom he has crushed. If he had known that, as you and I know it, he would never have embarked on that career at all. So, really, instead of execrating that man for his selfishness, the wiser part would be to pity him for his ignorance. He is acting very badly, but he is doing so just because he does not understand.

So, remember, it is ignorance that is at the root of it all. Those people who do not know as yet what they should do, are acting foolishly, for they are trying to invent ways for themselves instead of following God's way. We ought, by the way, it seems to me,

try to see for ourselves how far we belong to those who know. You will say, of course, that we belong to those who know, because we have the Theosophical knowledge. No, I do not think that is all that is intended by any manner of means. The brain knowledge which enables you, let us say, to take up a Theosophical subject and talk about it, make a lecture of it, may be quite unreal. The knowledge which you have may be perfect according to the books. You may be able to make a speech on the subject which will be of great use to other students and help them, and yet it seems to me that your knowledge may, as regards yourself, be quite unreal and superficial. I always think that only that knowledge which is woven into life, which is acted upon, whose precepts are practised, is real knowledge. You live into these truths and they become a part of yourself.

All you who are older members will know exactly what I mean by that, I am sure. You know you have read some Theosophical book, have been very deeply impressed and undoubtedly assimilated all it had to teach in the way of brain knowledge, the ideas have illuminated you greatly; but ten years afterwards (assuming that you have been carrying on your Theosophical studies and living your Theosophical life) read that book again and you will see how much more it means to you now than it did. If you can look back to your state of knowledge at that

earlier time, you will see you had it all clear in your brain, but your conception of what it meant is now very different from what it was then. That is because you have lived the thing since, and made it part of yourself so that now it comes naturally.

It is somewhat like the difference between doing some difficult action quite perfectly without intense attention because you have learned how, and then doing the same thing years afterwards and doing it automatically because you have been doing it since without having to think about it. It is like obeying with great care some new and intricate law; yet when, after many years, you have made it a part of yourself, you forget the intricacy because it has become part of yourself; it is all perfectly simple and easy to you. Then only has the knowledge become a power in your hands. Remember how, when you were a child, you copied out a page of writing and you were very proud if there were no mistakes. You do the same thing now without thinking of it and you would not expect there to be any mistake, because you have the thing as a real power that can be used. Then it was something novel which you could only just manage with effort, now it is all simple and perfect and easy, and you do not notice all the stages. It is the same thing with the reading of Theosophical truths. You start upon them and make great efforts; yet, so long as you are making efforts to do it you have not really got there

at all. When it has become as a tool in your hands, that is the time when you have achieved something.

To finish that sentence:

> and so they often act foolishly, and try to invent ways for themselves which they think will be pleasant for themselves, not understanding that all are one, and that therefore only what the One wills can ever be really pleasant for any one.

You know it is a great motto of utilitarianism to pursue the greatest good of the greatest number. It is a great improvement upon the previous idea that the good of only a few should be considered and that the others should be considered a negligible quantity. Yet it is an imperfect view; the truth is that you cannot ignore the minority at all, just because all are one; and therefore what is said here is the real truth, that nothing can ever be really pleasant for one unless it is what the One wills, the One who stands behind. For, in that One, all are one. You do not understand that. You cannot understand it until you have developed the consciousness of the buddhic plane. Then, for the first time, you will begin to know a little of what it means and, even then, only by slow degrees do you learn how utterly all are one.

You think of it as a sort of religious duty to believe that all are one, as a kind of pious aspiration that some day all will be one. We say: "Well, we have all come forth from the same great Father and therefore we are all brothers and we are all one."

We do not understand the reality and the depth of that until we experience it; and, when you do experience it, then—I cannot explain; only those who have touched it know, and they cannot tell you, but at least some suggestion may be made—all consciousnesses are seen as one; all the world becomes one; all the love in it is the one Divine Love; all the beauty in it is the one Divine Beauty, and the holiness of the world is the one holiness of God. Christ said that long ago when a man came to Him and called Him "Good Master"; He said: "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but One, that is, God." That is very true. The goodness of each man is the goodness of God showing itself forth in him, and all the beauty and glory of the world as you see it in the earth and sea and sky is nothing but part of that one Divine Beauty; and stage by stage as you rise through different sub-planes, from level to level, more and more you will see that Beauty opening itself out before you, until you learn to see all Beauty through each beautiful thing. A very wonderful and a very beautiful conception, but nevertheless utterly true. It is the truest of all facts. It is all one; and when you learn that, then you will see the glory of the Divine in and through everything, and you will see all its other glories through each of those, so that when a beautiful landscape opens before you, it will not be merely that which you will admire, but all which it suggests,

the whole, the infinite whole, of which it is only a tiny part.

All these things are true. Difficult to realise yet, but utterly true; and that is the way—one of the ways—in which your life becomes so much fuller, so much wider, so much more glorious, because in everything you see all, and each glory and beauty that comes to you reminds you of all the rest. And so your life is a wonderfully full one and a wonderfully happy one, and through that happiness you realise something of the Eternal Bliss, through that love you realise something of the Eternal Love; and it is only in that way that great advancement can come to you. Only when you realise that you yourself are nothing but a point in the whole; only when you see that, is your consciousness in the way to merge into His, so that through you He may see all this Beauty, and you, as in Him, may see it and realise it too. You in Him and He in you.

VI

January 19, 1915.

You will remember that we were on the ninth page of the book, where it is said :

> They are following the unreal instead of the real. Until they learn to distinguish between these two, they have not ranged themselves on God's side, and so this discrimination is the first step.

That is why that quality or qualification is put first of all—because until people have that, they are not definitely on the side of right as against wrong. Of course we have all made that choice long ago ; we have definitely decided to put ourselves on the right side, on the side of evolution, on the side of unselfishness and not on the side of selfishness.

> But [He says,] even when the choice is made, you must still remember that of the real and the unreal there are many varieties ; and discrimination must still be made between the right and the wrong, the important and the unimportant, the useful and the useless, the true and the false, the selfish and the unselfish.

These are, of course, all subdivisions, as it were, of the great division between the real and the unreal ; and it is important for us to bear in mind

that that is not a choice to be made once for all only; but it is a choice that we have to be continually making every day until the end, because, until we have set our faces in the right direction so that we know quite well which way we want to go, little points will still be constantly arising in connection with which we shall have to decide this way or that way, and all through them we have to bear this steadfastly in mind, we have to keep a constant watchfulness. You will find that referred to again and again in this book, because that is what is so hard, so difficult, the constant watching. He says to you lower down:

> Stop and think whether you really wish it.

Now to stop and think all the time is very wearisome. It is just that continual life of recollectedness, the continual repression that that means—never to forget the thing for a moment—which is so hard and which tires so many people. Many good people get tired when they try to do it; the perpetual strain of it is too much for them. It is very natural, but the people who get tired are the people who fail to achieve. Therefore, however wearisome, however irksome it may be, we must continue the life of recollectedness; we must always think before we speak, think before we act. Yes, it means a life of constant thought—that one never shall speak hastily, never act hastily. It is very wearisome, I

know that quite well; but it is the way, and there is no other way.

> Between right and wrong [He says,] it should not be difficult to choose, for those who wish to follow the Master have already decided to take the right at all costs.

That, of course, is quite certain. If any one hesitates between right and wrong he does not really wish to follow the Master. There is a great difference between affirming the thing and really wishing it deep down inside. People sometimes say, "Oh, how I wish I were clairvoyant, how I wish I could see astrally; how must I begin, what is the first step?" Well, the first step is to purify all your vehicles very perfectly down here on the physical plane. You must be very careful that your physical body does not have anything but the most suitable food. Yes, they would like astral sight, but, when it comes to the point, they prefer what they call a good dinner, as our President once said; and they will have that because they are used to it, and for the time they forget all about their desire for astral sight. You cannot do two things at once. If you want to make progress, all these little petty things have to become part of your life and you have to take care about them. I know it is wearisome, but there is this for your comfort, that, in connection with all these little things, you can set up *habits*. All of us have already set up habits, plenty of them—

mostly bad ones. That has been natural enough. Nevertheless we have to get out of them; and when we have got out of them, we may just as easily set up good habits. We may call to our assistance the peculiarities of the physical vehicle, for that is one of its most striking peculiarities—the way in which it seeks to repeat the things it has done before. That is what we call a habit; and if we try to set up good habits, the physical body will go on automatically, and presently we shall begin to forget about the things we have left hehind. Let us make use of these laws of Nature that come in our way—we want all the help we can get. There is no question as to the choosing between right and wrong. It would be unthinkable, for example, that we should try to cheat a fellow-creature—we have got past that, I hope and believe—or that we should obtain a living, in any objectionable way, by the slaughter of animals or anything of that sort. Any person who is doing that kind of thing, of course, does not wish to follow the Master. He does not wish to make a radical change. I hope it does not apply to any of our members, but—well, there are people you know, who wear articles of dress and of adornment, which can only be obtained by the slaughter of animals, sometimes by the slaughter, say, of the mother bird under peculiarly revolting circumstances. Now, all people who continue to wear such things as those, do not, of course, wish to follow the Master. They wish to

follow the fashion, not the Master. So with a great many things; but I do not think we should have any difficulty, we who are only Theosophists. I take it we have gone as far as that, and between right and wrong it should not be difficult to choose, because we have already decided.

Then He goes on to point out:

> But the body and the man are two, and the man's will is not always what the body wishes.

If you want really to do your best in this matter of progress, it is worth your while to make rather a careful study of these different vehicles and see exactly what they are. Here it is said, quite clearly, that the body wishes for things that the man does not wish for; and this is true, not merely of the physical, but of the astral body and the mental body. If you understand the constitution of these vehicles, you will then see what they are likely to want that is undesirable for you. You see, we are speaking of these almost as though they were different persons. In a way, they are. Each of these bodies, remember, is built of living matter, and the life in each of these vehicles does certainly join itself together, so that it gets a kind of corporate consciousness. You have all read that this happens in the case of the astral body, for you have read about the desire-elemental. If you have not read particularly on that subject, I should advise you to do so, because, by understanding

what the creature is, you can see how to deal with him with the least possible friction. But, He says:

> When your body wishes something, stop and think whether *you* really wish it. For *you* are God, and you will only what God wills; but you must dig deep down into yourself to find the God within you, and listen to His voice, which is *your* voice.

Just the stopping and thinking is so irksome, the regulated life is so irksome; people do not like a regulated life, because they want to be free, as they would say, to do what they wish. The curious thing is that people of unregulated life do not do what they wish; they are slaves to their astral bodies, and they do what *it* wishes. That desire-elemental becomes practically an entity. It is composed of the joint life of all the astral cells that make up your astral body. Each, by itself, would be a small, only partly conscious life, struggling on its upward way—on its downward way would be more correct, because, for it, evolution is to pass into the mineral kingdom, to pass lower down. When these lives find themselves all joined together in an astral body, they do, to a certain extent, practically club together and act as though they were a unit, and you get the effect of an astral body that has strong instincts of its own. It has instincts so strong that they act as though they were a will. In fact we could almost say that collectively they have a will of their own.

Of course you must not blame your astral body; you must not regard it, as the mediæval Christian did, as

a tempting demon. It is nothing of the sort. It does *not know* anything about you or your existence, *it is not tempting you at all.* It is simply trying to find expression for itself, to find the best way to evolve, just as all other creatures are doing. The way for it to evolve is to get coarser and coarser vibrations, to come nearer and nearer to the mineral kingdom. That is why its interests are so often opposed to yours, because it wants the stronger and coarser vibrations. You, by the very hypothesis, want the finer ones, and the coarser vibrations are connected with all those feelings and emotions you do not want to develop in yourself. All the coarser vibrations—envy, jealousy, selfishness, those are all coarse strong vibrations. (Do not misunderstand me, when I say "strong".) But the far more delicate, more rapid and really more powerful vibrations, love, sympathy, devotion, are all vibrations of the higher part of the astral body; consequently they are the kind of vibration that your astral body of itself does not want, but you, the soul, do. People have actually asked the question: "Ought we not to give it a chance for its evolution; ought we not to let it have its coarse vibrations?" No, that is mistaken philanthropy, because you cannot do it thoroughly. You could not be coarse or brutal enough if you tried. The nearest dog which you pass in the street would work these lower vibrations better. The kindest thing you can do with the

coarser matter of your vibrations is to shake it out of your astral body and let it fasten itself upon some savage, a dog or a cow, where those vibrations can act and where no harm is done to anybody. You have the coarse matter in your astral body because in some previous lives you allowed those lower emotions to play strongly through you; therefore you have brought over the liability to this sort of thing. But in this life, let us hope, you are choosing more wisely and do not intend to reproduce all the follies of your past lives. You have here seeds of the very same things that you had in your last life, but why should you, now that you know better, indulge in those things? The best way to serve them is to shake them out. Send them away from you and they will go somewhere else where they will be more in place than they will be with you. That is the best and kindest thing you can do. You have of course the responsibility of the past, but you need not add to that by making fresh responsibilities in the present; otherwise you will have the same trouble in your next life. The trouble you have made for yourself you must bear philosophically, and you need not make fresh results, or make causes which will generate fresh results. You have to face this desire-elemental in your astral body. He is in his way quite cunning. Although he has no intelligence strictly speaking, yet he acts very cleverly, very cunningly. We cannot quite put ourselves in his

place, at so low a stage, but evidently he finds himself surrounded by something finer than himself—mental matter. He appears to find by experiment that if he can get that to vibrate along with his matter he gets very much more vibration than he otherwise would, and it is very much more intense. If he can make you think that you want what *he* wants, he is much more likely to get it. He insidiously inserts himself and tries to stir up emotions, but he does not know about you; he is trying to stir up this desire, this wish for something, if he can do it. Suppose it were a case of impure thought, a very obvious case—if he can induce an impure thought, he will presently get impure emotions. You can see how the thing acts. If he can sneak in a jealous thought there will presently be a feeling of jealousy rankling, that is what he wants—not because it is evil, but just because for him it is nothing but a very strong vibration, a coarse vibration, such as he enjoys. Still it would be a great mistake to give in to him in this matter.

Now there is a mental elemental, and a physical elemental as well. There is the elemental life in your physical body which is exceedingly useful to you, remember, and does for you a great many valuable things. For example, he is engaged in the task of the building up of tissue and that sort of thing. If you get a scratch, a cut, or a wound, it is the physical elemental that at once hurries the white corpuscles to the spot to try to build together new cells. There is

a great deal that is very interesting about the work of this elemental in your physical body. Only, while some of its activities are eminently useful to you, it is liable to have impulses which are not suitable for you, as you are told here.

First of all He goes into that, He says:

> Stop and think whether *you* really wish it. For *you* are God, and you will only what God wills; but you must dig deep down into yourself to find the God within you, and listen to His voice which is *your* voice.

We say: "I am that Self, that Self am I." That is so difficult to realise, and I am not sure that any merely intellectual conception can ever bring the idea home to you. I can tell you how I, myself, first got that idea absolutely home, but it is not a method I can recommend to you. I was making experiments with regard to the atomic sub-planes and was endeavouring to concentrate all the powers of the causal body in the atomic part of it. I was trying to concentrate the whole power in the atomic part of the mental plane, which it is of course possible to do when you have developed that consciousness and can work with it. Now the object of this was to discover how far one could utilise what we call the short cuts which run between the different atomic sub-planes. You know that you can work up from sub-plane to sub-plane, and then from the atomic physical to the astral, and so on, sub-plane by sub-plane. But there is another way also. You can take a short cut from

the atomic physical to the atomic astral, and from that to the atomic mental. The atomic sub-planes of all our planes make a cosmic plane—the whole thing makes a cosmic plane in its first manifestation with nothing but atoms at different levels. Now it is possible to travel by that short cut. I heard of another kind of short cut at right angles, as it were, again to that, if you can understand this idea. I heard among higher pupils that, if one's consciousness could be focused in one of these atomic sub-planes one got a line of communication open to the corresponding sub-plane, to a corresponding plane in the next cosmic sub-plane altogether, so that, by focusing oneself entirely in the highest atomic mental, there would be a certain possibility of coming into touch with the corresponding mental atomic in the next set of planes altogether above all the planes we know. Of course no one had any hopes of reaching such a plane as that, but there was a possibility of communication. I tried and found that there was such a possibility, but it did not seem to me a thing that one could use at all; yet I was able to see—I cannot describe it I am afraid—the corresponding sub-plane in the cosmic mental, two whole sets of planes above where we are. I could not reach it in any sort of way—I do not think that an Adept could reach it. But, if I could not reach it, I could at least see it. It was as though I was at the bottom of a well and was looking up to a star. I could

see that consciousness. I had, I suppose, some very faint reflection of what that consciousness would be. The one thing that was borne in upon me, with an intensity which I cannot describe to you, was the fact that, if before I had supposed that I had a will, that I had an intellect, that I had emotions, they were not mine, they were His. They were His will, His feelings, not mine at all. I have never forgotten that. As I say, I could not even tell you how to try and do such a thing—you must develop the consciousness of the causal body before it could be possible to make the attempt—nor whether the thing would lead to anything useful. At least it impressed that thing upon me with a certainty that, as I tell you, I cannot describe. I know that that is so—know it so certainly, so right down inside, that I think it has affected me ever since. You can gain that certainty in another way which is more within reach, though not very near, and that is through the Buddhic consciousness. As soon as you reach that, you find the sea of consciousness opening round you, and you know that you are a part of it, that that is you, and yet at the same time many others are in it and share it along with you; and of course, presently, apart from that feeling you come to realise that this is all one consciousness, and it is penetrating you just as it is penetrating all others. So you come to know that you are one with all—that you are God. That is a very strange feeling. It

gives you the utmost safety, the utmost confidence, the most tremendous impulse and stimulus of which you can think; and yet I can quite imagine that at first it might alarm people because they might feel that they are losing themselves. They are not. Remember how the Christ said: "He that loseth his life for My sake shall find it." Remember that Christ represents the Buddhic principle. The words then mean: "He who for My sake, for the Christ development within him, will put aside the causal body in which he has been living for so long will find *himself*, will find the truer, grander and higher life." It needs some courage to do it. The first time you are wholly in the Buddhic vehicle and find that your causal body upon which you have been depending for all these thousands of years has vanished—well, it is startling, and yet that is the way. You must lose your life for Christ's sake, if you want to find it for all eternity. For the causal body also passes and is of time, but when you pass above that, you enter into the consciousness of the Logos Himself, which has no limit of which we know anything—I dare not say it has no limit, I know nothing about it—it has no limit of which we know anything whatever. So to realise that you are God, I think it needs some such experience as that. Failing that, you must try all the time to impress it on yourself. You must say: "More radiant than the sun, purer than the snow, more subtle than the ether,

is the Self, the Spirit, within my heart; I am that Self, that Self am I." You must say it and you try to make yourself believe it, but it is more or less of an effort, it is one of the things that you believe but cannot realise. When you have one or other of such experiences as I have described you will know it with absolute certainty. I cannot convey the idea of it to you, but you will know it, and nothing will ever again shake that certainty in you. Then, after such an experience as that, you have not to dig so deeply down within you, to find the God within you and to listen to His voice, which is your voice.

Then He says:

> Do not mistake your bodies for yourself—neither the physical body, nor the astral, nor the mental. Each one of them will pretend to be the Self, in order to gain what it wants.

He speaks of these bodies quite definitely, as though they were separate persons.

> But you must know them all, and know yourself as their master.

That is precisely the advice I was giving you a few minutes ago. You had better know something of these bodies and their possibilities. Study them, because only thus can you be prepared to meet their wiles. They are undoubtedly cunning in their ways, they will try to make you think you want these things. Their empire is absolutely unchecked for most people in the world. People not only make no effort to

throw off their domination, but they do not even know that there is any domination to throw off. They do not separate themselves from their bodies. Of course it is this disastrous teaching about men having a soul, which is responsible for so much harm. If they would only realise that man *is* a soul, then at once they would begin to disentangle things a little. So long as a man has this idea that the soul is something vague floating about him, so long have you very little hope of doing him any good. You must identify yourself with the higher, and so He says you must know them all; take up the study of the thing scientifically and read what is written about them, and you will then have some idea of what your business is with regard to them. Then He gives some instances; He says:

> When there is work that must be done, the physical body wants to rest, to go out walking, to eat and drink; and the man who does not know says to himself: "I want to do these things and I must do them."

You will notice that very strongly in the case of children. If a child wants to do a thing, it is heaven and earth to him, he must do it then and there; and if he cannot do it, he thinks the universe is falling round him. You will notice the same thing with savages; they are just like that, creatures of impulse. Just to do some trifling thing they want to do, they kill a man, the impulse is so strong to do the thing. The savage is a child. The civilised man stops

himself and says, "I will wait and think what will happen." Remember that the civilised man is the older man, and the savage is the child of humanity. So, of course, the grown-up person should remember this in dealing with children. The child dashes off and plays; and far too often we, who are older, fall upon him and blame and scold him, not understanding the child nature. He says, "I did not remember." It is absolutely true; he did not; but we doubt that because we know that we should remember. We forget (it is so many years ago) that we should not have remembered any more than he. We have forgotten the childhood of the race, we have forgotten the time when we were savages, and consequently the savage generally goes down before the more civilised man. He has to, there is no help for it; the world must go on. Just in the same way with the child, we should say, "I know you have an impulse, but really you must not do that just now. It will upset the arrangements of a great many other people. You must do it some other time." That is the way education progresses. It is the same way with the savage; he learns, but generally he is killed in the process of learning, that certain impulses must not be followed. It takes him several births to learn it; but by degrees he becomes a little less savage and a little more civilised. Most people never attempt to repress the desires which spring within them. The man who knows says:

"This that wants is not I; it must wait awhile." He is dealing with the thing as a separate entity, as a thing that he can manage. He says:

> Often when there is an opportunity to help some one, the body feels: "How much trouble it will be for me; let some one else do it."

You remember how once our President made a very apposite remark with regard to that. She said that there are very many cases where there is obviously a good piece of work to be done, but that most people look at it and say, "Yes, that is a thing that must be done; well, some one will do it some day; why should I bother about it?" The person who is really in earnest says, "There is a piece of work which ought to be done," and will plunge in and do it at once. That is just the opposite attitude. The other person says, "There are plenty of people who can do that," not realising that they are waiting for him. So the thing does not get done. What does the Master say? He says:

> But the man replies to his body: "You shall not hinder me in doing good work."

"You see I am separate from you, I am going to do my work." This was a new idea at the time, but it has been very widely taken up in Theosophical literature:

> The body is your animal—the horse upon which you ride. Therefore you must treat it well, and take good care of it; you must not overwork it, you must feed it properly

on pure food and drink only, and keep it strictly clean always, even from the minutest speck of dirt.

That idea that the body is an animal is really very valuable. It sounds so obvious, you know, and yet the more fully you follow it out, the nearer you will be doing what is required. Let us suppose that you keep a horse. I am taking it for granted that you are a reasonable person, a kindly person, and that, while you want your work done, at the same time you want your horse to be comfortable and as happy as possible, because you want to keep him in good health. First of all you want to make friends with him and get to know the creature, and to make him to know you and to feel that you are kindly disposed towards him, that you mean well by him, and that you will give him all that you can in reason. You establish a friendly relation, and then you watch quite carefully to see what is necessary. You find out how much food he needs, and what kind of food suits him best, and you give him that. You take great care that he shall have plenty, but you do not give him things that will be bad for him. At the same time you work him, because that is the object of your having a horse. But you take great care not to overwork him in any way. You find out what he can do, and you set him to do it. You get him to trust you, so that he will obey you, and that, when you suggest anything, he will do what you want, knowing that all will be well with him. In this

way he will soon learn to trust you even when he is frightened. So you get the utmost work out of him with the least possible trouble.

A bad trainer will sometimes terrorise a horse. He will never after that get really good work out of him. You do not want that, you want to have a friendly agreement with the creature. Your body is exactly like that; you ought to find out the best way to deal with it. It is of no use to try to use Hatha Yoga methods, that is a great mistake. You must be kind to it, but you must be the master; it must not manage you. You must treat it intelligently and get out of it the maximum of work it can do. Get as much out of it as you can, comfortably; never overdo it, never overstrain its powers, you may do harm in an hour that it will take years to repair. You will do very much better by trying to understand it, trying to find out what it needs in the way of food and drink. They do not all need the same—they all want carbon and hydrogen and that sort of thing, but the proportion in which they can take them differs very much. Within reason, give it what it wants and likes, but never things which are bad for it, like alcohol and and meat. Keep up a friendly relation with it; in that way both of you will get on far more satisfactorily. But never set yourself at variance with it as the Hatha Yogi does, thinking you can dominate it by cruelty or by starving it, or by self-repression. That is never the way to manage anything, from a

child to a body or an animal. Never try to force anything, but always try to get what you want by understanding what you are dealing with, and inducing such intelligence as the creature may have to work along with you. That is the way to get your result.

VII

January 26, 1915.

You will remember that we left off at this passage on the thirteenth page, in which it speaks of the body as the animal, the horse on which we ride. You will remember that I mentioned to you then, that with that, as with so many other things, it is always wiser and best to take the middle path. On the one hand to let the animal do exactly what it wishes, is to make it absolutely useless to us, and to help neither its evolution nor our own; while, on the other hand, to overwork it, to overstrain it, not to attend to it properly, is the opposite extreme, which is equally bad, which is indeed very often worse, for you may very easily overstrain this complex mechanism which we call our body. You may thus, before you realise it, do harm which can never be undone. I know that men constantly say in business: "Well, I must do a little bit more." Very often that means just the overstraining of the mechanism, and that which is overstrained does not come back to its normal condition. It is very easy to strain the thing because it is not like any other very delicate piece of machinery. It is living machinery, it is wonderfully recuperative,

and in many cases what we know as "a good body," to begin with, will stand a great deal of ill-usage. But the fact that it survives the ill-usage and that the man lives through it does not by any means imply that no harm has been done, or that the man in question will, for the rest of his life, be able to do equally well. On the contrary, very often a very slight overstrain leaves a permanent mark.

Therefore I would caution any of you, who are attempting anything in the way of occult development, to be very careful in your ordinary life as well as in your Theosophical life, that you do not overstrain your body. It is not a right thing to do. It is not a politic thing to do. You do not, in the end, gain anything by it. I have done it myself; I am speaking from experience. I have on occasions overstrained my vehicles, but I know that I am getting an old man, that I pay for that in being somewhat less efficient than I might have been, if on various occasions in earlier life I had been just a little more careful. So I would warn you emphatically, do not run the risk of overstrain; take to heart our President's words: "What I have not time to do is not my work." That is a very important thing to remember. I know each person is impressed with the idea that there is a vast amount of work which only he can do and nobody else can do quite so well. That may be true, nevertheless you must not do that which you cannot do without injuring your vehicle.

You have no right to injure the vehicle. You have it given to you as the Karma of your previous lives, and it is your duty to make the most of it. If you overstrain it, then you are not making the best of it. In so many cases people, without even knowing it, are overdoing things, and they find out only when it is too late. Therefore be warned by the experience of others. More or less, we have all done that in our ignorance, before we knew. I should take care not to overstrain it now, because I have learned that it is not wise to do so (I was not so wise in earlier youth). Take the benefit of the experience of an older student and do not ill-treat the body by overworking it.

Then you see how it is said:

> You must feed it properly on pure food and drink only.

Now of course the pure food clearly means vegetable and not animal food. That we take for granted. But you must feed it properly, and that means that you must take care that it gets the amount and the kind of nourishment which it needs; therefore you should take a little trouble to find out what suits it best. The theory that anybody can live on anything is not one that commends itself to the practical man. People differ enormously in their dispositions and in their capacities, and you will find that the capacities of their physical bodies also differ in the same way. It is an old proverb, that "What is one man's meat is another man's poison," and that is true in this

matter of food values. I know there is a disposition to think that people who pay too much attention to food are worrying themselves unnecessarily about purely physical things. Certainly I would say, do not overdo the thing; take the middle path and be wise. But you owe it to your body to find out what it can take and what amount of that suits it best. It is quite easy to find out by taking a little trouble and making experiments.

There are many books on that subject. Dr. Kingsford's *Perfect Way in Diet* I knew many years ago, but any of the much later books on the subject would tell you what amount and what proportion of different kinds of food are needed, how much of the flesh-forming, bone-forming, and blood-forming foods are necessary, carbohydrates, proteids. etc. Any of those books will tell you, and they will give you long lists of foods which will show you what to eat. Very likely there may be only one or two that may suit your particular body. Find out what those are and live principally on them. You, I take it, have all been following the perfect diet—the vegetable food. You may or may not have had some trouble in coming to it from earlier habits. I know very well in England, when people begin to be vegetarians, they usually misunderstand the whole business. They have been living principally on meat with cabbage and potatoes. Their idea of being vegetarians is to give up meat and live on cabbage and potatoes.

Now potatoes are all starch and cabbage is mostly water; you cannot live on starch and water. You need other things—flesh-forming foods—there are plenty of them, and there are many different kinds of them; so assuredly you could find what would suit you. But you ought to do it. If, as some vegetarians do, you are having a good deal of difficulty with your digestive organs, then you are taking the wrong thing. Try other things; there is always a way out. Unless a person is hopelessly diseased, there is always a way, and it should be done. If your little children keep caterpillars in order to see them turn into butterflies, they take a good deal of trouble to find what kind of leaf the caterpillar will eat. They know only one kind of leaf will suit it. You might take as much trouble over the animal which is to serve you for so many years. It is not true that it is foolish or material to pay attention to these things, because you want to get the highest efficiency that you can out of your machinery, and you must find out what suits it; otherwise you are not getting the best—you are only getting the second or third best.

So you must feed it properly on pure food and drink only, and keep it strictly clean always. Very great care must be taken about that, which seems such an obvious thing. There are various reasons for it, not only for health, not only because it is the nice, the right, the refined thing to do, but also because the Master frequently uses those who are in

close relation with Him as channels for the outpouring of His force. That is generally confined to those who are His pupils, those who are in close touch with Him. It is only through them that great outpourings can be made; but remember that any earnest student is already under His eye, and that therefore it is not impossible that any one of you might be needed and might be used as a channel for force. Many different kinds of force are poured out by our Masters for many different purposes. Sometimes one person is suitable as a channel and sometimes another. If you watch the case of two pupils side by side, you will see that one is used always for one type of force and the other for another—quite a different type. Now, as I say, there are many such types. It might well happen that, in a given place, there was no pupil quite suitable for some particular kind of outpouring, and there might be among you someone who, though not so far advanced, was very suitable for that particular purpose. In such a case the Master would want to use you; and remember that this outpouring is on the physical as well as astral, mental, buddhic and other higher planes. If your physical body failed Him for a moment in this most important respect, He would not, He could not, utilise it, because you would not be a suitable channel. The physical body might not be in a condition of perfect cleanliness. It would be like pouring pure water through a dirty pipe; it would be fouled on the way.

It would be better to take the additional trouble of sending it round by some other channel. Therefore you will notice that those who are in close relation with the Master are exceedingly careful about the matter of perfect bodily cleanliness. You cannot be too careful with regard to it. If strength is outpoured through you, it comes mainly through your hands and your feet, those are extremities, the channels which are chiefly used. Take care that you can be utilised if you should be needed. Apart from that, it is the healthy, the refined, the proper, the best thing to do. Therefore it should be done.

Then He says:

> Keep it strictly clean always, even from the minutest speck of dirt. For without a perfectly clean and healthy body you cannot do the arduous work of preparation, you cannot bear its ceaseless strain.

You may think that exaggerated, that talk about the arduous work, the ceaseless strain. If you feel in that way perhaps you are not undertaking much work very strongly. Remember as I have already pointed out, that we are now a little past the middle of the Fourth Round of our seven planets, and we are trying to do, in the way of development, the work which it is intended for humanity to do towards the end of the Seventh Round. We are, therefore, three whole rounds ahead in the effort that we are making, three whole rounds ahead of our fellows. More than that, we are trying now in

a few lives to do what for them will take all the thousands and thousands of lives that lie between now and the end of the Seventh Round. It is not only that, it is also that we are trying to do the work under much more difficult conditions, and with matter not so fully prepared. By the end of the Seventh Round the very matter with which you are working will be very much vivified, all the spirillæ of the atoms will be in full working order, instead of only about half of them, and the surrounding influences will then be favourable. Now you have to battle against the vast weight of selfishness in the world. You have to fight against all sorts of sordid influences such as made this great War. All the people who make the trouble and the difficulty now, will have been dropped out in the middle of the Fifth Round, they will be weeded out and the whole world will be possessed by the people who understand and who are moving along the Path we are endeavouring to undertake. See what a difference that will be: you will have, while living in the outer world, all the advantages that now might accrue from living in a monastery with men directing their minds towards higher things.

In very many ways we are undertaking a very formidable task indeed; we are undertaking to compress into one or two lives what would otherwise have taken us hundreds of lives. That is hard work. It is very truly arduous, this preparation, and if you try to hurry it, if you try to make really rapid progress,

it is a ceaseless strain. The words are well chosen. You cannot bear that ceaseless strain unless all your bodies, including the physical, are in good order. Therefore perfect health is a necessity towards really rapid progress. Whenever the health fails, there is a delay at once; for the body cannot bear the strain that would have to be put on it. Those who are in charge of the progress of any pupil always watch most carefully to see whether there is any overstrain. They will not put the least extra work upon one under their care, until they see that he is perfectly able to bear it with a suitable margin. The strain is really ceaseless, the work is arduous; so He says you must take care.

> But it must always be you who control that body, not it that controls you.

You see you keep the middle path once more, which is so often the right and the only right way.

Then on the fourteenth page you come to something more difficult:

> The astral body has *its* desires—dozens of them; it wants you to be angry, to say sharp words, to feel jealous, to be greedy for money, to envy other people their possessions, to yield yourself to depression. All these things it wants, and many more, not because it wishes to harm you, but because it likes violent vibrations, and likes to change them constantly. But *you* want none of these things, and therefore you must discriminate between your wants and your body's.

Your astral body's in this case. It is more difficult to realise, but you are not your astral body. It is not

after all very difficult, with a little practice, to realise that we are not this physical body, that that is only an overcoat. But the astral body, our emotions and desires, these seem to be our very dispositions, to be part of ourselves. Many people surely feel that they are their desires, and indeed they are. You may see such people in every-day life all about you. You may see people who are full of their desires and emotions, not necessarily bad ones. They are so full of those emotions, that, if you could imagine these taken away, there would be nothing left—the whole person is desire and emotion. Now for such a person as that it would be very difficult to separate himself from his astral body; and yet that is what we have to do. You see, it says the astral body wants you to be angry, wants you to say sharp words. Well, suppose it does. You know quite well, when you come to think of it, that that is of no use to you; you know that you do not want that sort of thing; it is only this body that wants it. Well, why does it want it? Because it wants violent vibrations—that is to say, it does not want the anger, the jealousy, but it wants vibrations that are strong, and those are the strongest that it can easily get from you. It does not care whether those vibrations are of anger or, let us say, of fear, it would be just the same rejoicing to your astral elemental if you were in a condition of panic fear, that would be just as good for it as personal anger. Neither of them would be at all good for you. You do

not want these violent outbursts. You do not want the coarser vibrations which are of the greatest interest to this desire-elemental.

It is a little difficult for some of our members to clear out of their minds the old Christian theory of the devil. They regard this astral elemental as a devil sent to tempt them. Now that is very hard upon the poor creature. It is not an entity to begin with, it is simply the life of your astral particles all combining together making a kind of common life; each particle is a separate thing, a separate life, but, just as all the bees in a hive or all the ants in an ant-hill work together for one common object, and each will avenge anything done to the others as far as they know it, so do these particles join forces and coalesce. The lives of all these astral cells combine together into what is practically one life, and so you get the result of a kind of creature.

The creature in question has not any intelligence, but it has a great deal of cunning. It has an instinct for its own objects which stands in the place of intelligence and makes it often very much more than a match for a human being, even though it is very low in the scale of evolution, although it is not even a mineral. It is rather humiliating to allow yourselves to be defeated or to be used as a tool by something which is not even a mineral yet. The creature does not know anything about you. Curiously, if it ever should be possible for it to know about you, you

would appear to it as a tempting demon, because your efforts are always against its own, and it knows its efforts are all in the direction of its proper evolution, which after all is the Divine Will for it. You will appear to it as a vague force which interferes with its getting the vibrations ordained for it by God's will. You are holding it back from making progress down towards the mineral. Never mind. It is your business to fill your proper place in evolution.

You ought to have outgrown those lower vibrations, and you are outgrowing them; therefore cast that matter away from you and it will be attracted to some vehicle through which it can reasonably develop. Do not let yourself be deceived by it. It is difficult to deal with this creature; for a long time you have been letting it have its own way. You must have been doing so in previous lives, if not in this, or you would not have that particular kind of astral matter in your body in this life. It has got into the habit of being yielded to, and it is very difficult to counteract the momentum. There is a permanent atom that attracts round it just the kind of matter that you had in your previous life. The creature has thus a certain amount of continuity, through that permanent astral atom. It is difficult to turn round suddenly and check this creature, but you can do it. You can easily do it. You can discover along what lines of undesirable activity your particular astral body wants to run. Each person has his own

difficulties. One, perhaps, is nervous and irritable or prone to jealousy, or is greedy for money, or some of these things that are mentioned here. You can find out along what line your particular astral body wants to run riot, then quietly set yourself to check it.

Suppose it is irritability—that is a very common thing under the horrible conditions of noise under which we live. Well, you may make up your mind that you will not be irritable. You will perhaps meditate on the subject; that is a very good thing to do. Take irritability as a subject for your meditation, but do not set to work to combat irritability; set yourself to meditate upon patience. Never think of the evil thing and of fighting against it, because you stir it up the more. If, instead of that, you think of the opposite and concentrate all your force on that, you will do very much more good. A very good example of the way that works is if you are thinking about someone who is irritable, in order to help that person to cure it. If you were thinking of him as irritable, every thought of yours intensifies his irritability. But if, instead of thinking of his irritability and what a pity it is, you think, "I should like him to be calm and patient," then all the strength of your thought goes in the direction of making him so. That is true of yourself too. Instead of paying attention to your irritability, you go to work and meditate on patience. You will meet the most

irritating person you know. At first you will probably be irritable, because you are in the habit of it; but afterwards you will remember, "I did not mean to do that." At least that is something if you have remembered afterwards. Perhaps the next time, or the twentieth time, you will remember at the moment instead of just afterwards, and you will check yourself and not be irritable that time. Perhaps the third time or in the third stage, at any rate, you will remember just before you are going to say something irritable. Then you have the feeling of irritability, but you will not show it. That is a very distinct advance. The next step is that you will not even feel the irritability at all. Then it is conquered and you will have no trouble in this or other lives to come.

Meditate on the opposite. I know many people who have set themselves to do that. But they keep it up for three weeks or so, and then say, "I will not meditate along these lines any longer, I am getting no results." That is about as sensible as if you were to set out on a three days' journey to the interior, and after about three hours you were to sit down and say: "Oh, it is no good, I am not making any progress, I am not getting anywhere." You are on the way, you know.

It is exactly the same with the business of meditation, though remember that in this world scientific rules act all the time and that every force

you are putting in must produce results whether you see them or not. If you do not see the result it is not because there is none. You do not see it because there is something more than you know to overcome, and your force is going into that to overcome it. It is inevitable, it is scientifically necessary that your efforts must produce results. They *are* doing it. Go on steadily, do not mind. Do not think even about the question of results, just direct your thoughts to the patience, or whatever it is, you are going to develop. In the meantime no harm has been done.

What is wanted evidently, here, is that you should have no feelings at all in the sense of feelings that can be hurt or offended. Feelings in the sense of sympathy, of love, you may and must have to the uttermost; but you must simply be pachydermatous. It must be impossible to offend you, it must be impossible to hurt your feelings. You would say that means "be a callous kind of person". Not at all. It means, rather, a very wise person. It may be there are some so thick-headed that they cannot see an insult. To be able to see it and yet to be wise enough to take no notice of it, surely that is the better way. Not only that, but you must try to reach a stage where you do not feel hurt. People say nasty things about you. Well, never mind, people have been saying nasty things about other people ever since the world began, and until we are all well on the way to

Adeptship they will continue to do so. After all, it does not matter what another person says. It is a passing vibration of the air, and it is no more than that unless you allow it to be so. If a person says something about you which is unpleasant, then supposing that you do not hear it, it does not hurt you in the least. If you do happen to hear it, you get into a fume of anger, horror, despair and all the rest of it. Therefore it is not the other person's doing, it is yours, when you get excited and worried. Take it quite philosophically, say: "Poor creature, that's all he, or she, knows about it!" Be quite gentle and kindly about it. What other people say is of very little importance, because, remember, they never know. You had better take that to heart when you feel disposed to resent it. Remember, "The heart knoweth his own bitterness." In each case a man knows his own reasons for what he says and does and thinks. You from outside never know the whole of his reasons, because you are looking at them superficially, and usually quite wrongly. Until you reach the buddhic plane, therefore, give him the benefit of the doubt, or, more wisely still, do not attempt to attribute motives to any one. If you feel their action to be wrong, the kindest thing is then to say: "Well, I should not do that, to me it seems to be wrong, but I assume that that person has his reasons, but I do not know what they may be." That is true; but, in order to do it, evidently

you yourself must have no feelings that can be hurt.

People are often rude, and why? So often not with you at all; but something else has happened to them previously, something has gone wrong, and the result is that they feel all out of tune. You are the next person who speaks to them; they snap your head off. They are not really angry about you. You must learn to make allowances for other people. Say to yourself: "Poor fellow, I suppose he cannot always feel as perfectly amiable and agreeable as I always am," and do not allow yourself to feel hurt. Probably that person afterwards is rather sorry he spoke a little rudely, or does not even realise that anything out of the common has been said. You know any feelings of being offended or being hurt must spring from a thought of self. If you were not thinking of yourself you could not feel hurt or offended. There must be a thought of self in it, and that is precisely what you must weed out and put away. Wherever you get a cause of jealousy, what is that but a thought of self? If you were thinking only about how much you loved the other person, it would not matter to you how much that person loved someone else. This delusion of the separated self is at the back of nearly all our troubles. All selfishness springs from that. Remember it was a necessity at one time. The selfish man is an anachronism, he is still carrying on what was very useful and necessary

for him twenty thousand years ago. It is not useful and necessary for him now ; he is simply behind the times.

Our business is to be up to date. We are living for and thinking of the future that is coming, the future that the Great World Teacher will make for us ; and because we are living for the future we must brush away all these antiquated ideas. Selfishness belongs to the Fourth Root Race, the old Atlantean times. Now self-sacrifice, not selfishness, is the ideal. The object of the Root Race is the ideal that is set in front of it. We must keep up to date.

Another thing, by the way, is perhaps worth mentioning to those of you who are, or have perhaps been, Christians ; do not be carried away by delusions about remorse and repentance. Remember the story of Lot's wife and do not look back, which is a very profitless occupation. You may say when you have made some bad mistakes : " Well that is a foolish thing to do, I will never do that again." Remember Talleyrand said : " Any man may make a mistake, we all make mistakes ; but the man who makes the same mistake twice is a fool." A Master once said : " The only repentance which is worth anything is the resolve not to do it again." The idea of remorse, of repenting of your sin, is a delusion. It is a waste of time and energy ; do not, therefore, let yourself be carried away by it. Let the dead past bury its dead. Put it behind you and go on

from where you are, but do not make the same mistake again, that is all.

Then He says:

> [The astral body] wants you to be greedy for money, to envy other people their possessions, to yield yourself to depression.

I hope you are not likely to be greedy for money, but you may be likely to yield yourselves to depression sometimes; that is a very common thing, common once more because of all this strain, worry and excitement; because we are not taking enough rest and proper kind of recreation; because we are living unhealthy lives. Depression is common enough; it is not only a very bad thing in itself, but it is very difficult to get rid of. I doubt whether you can escape from it, merely by saying to yourself: "I ought not to be depressed," but I think you can come out of it, even in the worst cases, if you will remember that you ought not to do it because of its effect on other people. Put that before yourselves. Remember you have all pledged yourselves to do all in your power to help others, therefore you dare not harm them. You know the mechanism of the thing perfectly, how your vibrations of depression spread out and affect their astral bodies and even their mental bodies. That is a wrong and evil thing to do. It is a more evil thing than perhaps you realise. If you have read anything of the history and the statistics of crime you will find that a very large number of crimes

are committed after a period of deep depression. That is so; any student of criminology will tell you that after a period of deep depression many a man commits a murder, or suicide. He says: "Such a feeling of despair came over me, I felt I could not help myself." Of course it would not be so among ourselves, we know better than to give way to deep depression, but remember that you are living in a world not entirely peopled by Theosophists. There are plenty of people in the lower stages of evolution who would be affected in the above manner. Be careful; you have no right to go about sowing mental and emotional disease. Even if yours be a light case of infectious disease, you do not know that the next person's case might not be light, and that your depression may affect him in a very much worse way. It cannot possibly do you any good; it may not, I hope, be doing you so very much harm, but at least you may pass it on to some one to whom it may be absolutely fatal. You must be careful. Merely to say: "I ought not to be depressed," is often not enough to pull you up out of the depths; I think the feeling: "I have promised to help others, I have no right to be depressed," ought to be enough to get you out of the deepest depression.

You will find this astral body constantly changing moods. As I have so often told you, it does not care what the vibrations are so long as they are strong. Sometimes it pushes you on to be angry

or jealous. Do you not see that the very fact that this thing is changing its moods all the time ought to help you to realise that it is not you? Your moods are not changing. You, as a soul, an ego, wish always the same thing: you wish your advancement, you wish to be able to help others, you wish to walk along the path intended, marked out for you by our Masters. Surely it is clear, then, that the astral body is not the self. That, I should think, ought to help you very much in your resolutions, that this is not the self. You can only try, you can only test it in practice. I sometimes think that perhaps we do not quite remember all that is expected of us in such respects as these. We can be very loving and very kindly to those who are loving and kindly to us. Remember what Christ once said: "If ye love them which love you what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" That is what everybody does. They all reciprocate love and kindly feeling. But if we wish to show that we have made any real progress, then we must pour out love when we meet with lack of love. He said: "Love your enemies, . . . and pray for them which despitefully use you." That is the time when a disciple of the Master can show himself at his true value, when he can do what the Master would do, when, although people speak ill of him, although they ill-treat him, he still thinks of them kindly and lovingly, and makes excuses and allowances for their foolishness. That is a thing that we

have to do. We must bear in mind that it is not enough to return love and kindliness, but that we must also pour out love and kindliness upon people who may as yet scarcely know what those things mean. That is what we have to do, and the more perfectly we can do that, the more truly are we disciples of the Master. You know how it was said of the Master: "When He was reviled He reviled not again," but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. We are all wronged and misjudged and misunderstood at one time or another. You need not worry about it. Karma will see after all that, you have no need to trouble yourself. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay." Leave it to Him. You need not worry yourselves, justice will always be done, and all that is wrong will some day come right. Those who now misunderstand will some day realise and be sorry that they misunderstood. In the long run no injustice will be done; the total will come out as it should; have no fear of that.

So remember, that our attitude must always be the attitude of love. If other people fail to respond to that love or misunderstand it, if they regard it as sentimental or foolish, that is their way of looking at it, for which we are not responsible. We must learn to treat them kindly, we must go on pouring out our affection and our friendly feeling upon them just the same. That is what a Master does. That is what the Logos Himself is doing all the time.

Many people speak ill of Him. Many people misunderstand and flout Him. The Logos makes no answer but the steady outpouring of the Divine Love for ever, and, in so far as we wish to be an expression of the Divine, that must characterise us also.

VIII

February 2, 1915.

WE have been dealing, you remember, with the astral body and its desires, and explaining that *you* want none of these things, and therefore you must discriminate between your wants and its wants. Then we turn to the mental body, and here it is said:

> Your mental body wishes to think itself proudly separate, to think much of itself and little of others.

Here, too, we must differentiate between what it desires and what we ourselves desire. I suppose it is more difficult even than in the case of the astral body for us to realise that we are not our minds. We get to recognise by degrees that the violent desires of the astral body are not our desires, that we do not change from mood to mood as it does, that we as souls could not do so; but in the case of the mental body perhaps it is a little more difficult. We are in the habit of saying, "I think so and so," and about nine times out of ten it is not "I think," but it is the mind thinks.

Consider your own ordinary thoughts. Remember now that we have been, most of us for some years,

some of us for many years, devoting ourselves especially to the study of Theosophy. We have been making it a point to try to control and to train our thoughts, and to turn them on the whole to higher things and not to lower; and yet, although that is so, we have only to consider our own thoughts for any given hour, or if we can remember them, for any given day, to see how small a proportion of them are worthy to be attributed to us, to the self, and how many of them belong merely to the lower mind. The lower flies from this thing to that. It flits over the surface of a vast variety of subjects, and usually deals exhaustively with none. It is not its desire as a rule to deal exhaustively with anything, but simply to pass from subject to subject, to get constant change of vibrations. You will find, if you can look back over even quite a short space of time, that you have thought during that time of a great number of quite insignificant things. I do not mean the time you are especially devoting to meditation, but the time in which you are not thinking of anything in particular, when you are walking along the street, for instance. You will find that though *you* are not thinking, there is something that is—something which is thinking all the time. That something is the mental body. If you do not hold it in control, if you let it go on thinking, it will pass over a vast number of useless things, useless to you; I do not mean bad things in any way. Of course, it is true that, in the case of many ordinary

people, their thoughts would be quite self-centred and even selfish. That is bad, but I hope that would not be the case with us. What you will find is that you have thought more or less vaguely about a number of things that are of no use to you or to anybody else. That ought not to be so.

You may think to yourselves, " It is very hard that one should have every moment to keep check upon what the mind is doing." I know it is very hard to do, but nevertheless it ought to be done for this reason; namely, that this mind is a mighty power, it is by far the strongest thing you have about you. If the will can be directed through the mental body, there are very few things you cannot do by that means. It is an enormous power and even though you should have no evil thought whatever, yet if you spend your hours or your days in these vague, casual, and useless thoughts, you are at least doing something that you should not,—you are wasting very large opportunities of being of use, very large opportunities of making yourself more fit to be valuable instruments in the hand of your Master. The idea that we should always be on the stretch, as it were, that our minds should always be turned to the higher things, strikes many people, I know, as a very hard requirement—as practically an impossibility. The truth is it is not so at all; like everything else it is a matter of habit. At present your minds have a tendency to fly off after all sorts of unimportant

things. If you can set up the habit of making a background of thought about our Masters, as I hope many of you have done, then that also will become a habit, and whenever you have nothing immediately pressing which demands attention, your mind will fall back on that. So long as that is so, not only can no harm come to you, but good must come of your thought. Only remember that, even then, the thought should be as precise as possible and not merely vague. There are members among us whose thought of the Masters is a kind of vague beatitude. They think of the Master and they pass into a sort of state of semi-ecstasy—a kind of religious coma as it were—in which they are not really actively thinking of anything. They think a vague floating thought of our Masters and they are, as it were, bathing themselves in that, and that is good. That is an enormous advance on all ordinary types of thoughts, and yet you might do better even than that. Instead of vaguely bathing yourselves in a thought which has no precision about it, you might let your intense devotion to your Master take the form of thinking, "What can I do for Him now, what can I do for Him at this moment, that He would like me to do?" It need not be a physical action, it may be nothing more than an act of simple thought—"What help can I give to someone by my thought?" If you are doing that with your thought, you are working for the Master as well as thinking of Him; and I can assure

you that it is that kind of thought, that kind of devotion towards Him, which He most appreciates. So be continually thinking: "What can I do to serve Him, in what direction can I employ my thought power?" It is a very mighty thing. If to you it is not yet so, then it should be. You should train the faculty, you should use it. You will very soon find its stupendous power. We do not know the limits of its power; it is very difficult to settle; but at least here is a great force which we all possess—rich and poor, old and young alike—*we can think*. The more definitely and the more lovingly we can think, the more definite work are we doing. It may not always show itself, it may not even show itself on the physical plane, but do not imagine that it is therefore any the less real work for Him. The affectionate thought you send out to try to help someone whom you know to be in need of help is a lever far greater than if you had given that person a sum of money. It may produce a life-long effect upon him, and you would find that difficult to do with your money. So many things you can do with thought which you cannot do otherwise.

You will find, again and again, in this book the strongest insistence upon the fact that there is really only one thought—only one will, only one work for us. You must not let yourselves think that because of that there is any monotony. No, the one thought is the thought of which I have spoken to you, the thought of service to the Master; the one will is to do that

work; the one work is the devotion to Him and, for His sake, to the world. There is no monotony about that. There is a most complex variety about the kind of work that will come in your way to do; but, whatever it is, it is all for Him and for the world. You will find all through this book the intense insistence upon unity. There is only one thought in the Master's mind, the thought of service, and if you wish to be one with the Master, that must be your only thought also. That implies that you make yourself fit for service, and so, in that way, it includes something of your own progress—but not your progress because you want to be great, but because you want to be a good instrument. You develop your mental body; yes, so do thousands of people. Many people in the outer world are developing their mental bodies until they are keen, sharp and strong. Take the intellect of the great scientific people, their splendid development. Why? Most often, among the scientific men, for the pure pursuit of knowledge, the intense desire to know. There is usually a desire in the background that, having learnt, they can afterwards make the knowledge useful; but first of all the desire of the scientific mind is to know. Sometimes there may be a side thought in a man's brain that, if he makes a great discovery, he will become famous, but I would not say that of most scientific men. My idea is that their pursuit of knowledge is for the sake of knowledge—knowledge

for its own sake, and then, having won it, to see whether some use cannot be made of it for humanity. Therefore that is a noble line, and among those who follow it there are many noble souls, of that I am sure.

Our development of the mental body must be even more truly and more definitely unselfish. Only please remember that we must develop it. Do not fall into the idea that you can afford to neglect the mental body. Do not take the idea of the Christian Saint that to be good is all, is sufficient, please remember that that is only modern Christianity, not the ancient Christianity in the least. Your modern Christian Church sets before you the idea of becoming a great saint—as good a person as you can possibly be, and that is all. In the ancient Church there were three definite degrees of development, and this attainment of saintship was the first of them and the least. The first grade was perfect Purification. S. Clement of Alexandria, one of the great Christian Fathers, speaks rather slightingly of that first stage. "Purity, why, it is only a negative state and it is valuable chiefly as a condition of insight." But it is a necessary condition, of course. The man must become a saint; but, when he has become a saint, instead of going to heaven and getting a palm and a robe and a harp, instead of that, he has then to begin to attain the second stage of Illumination, which was what S. Peter meant when he said to

his pupils: "Add to your faith knowledge." So that was the second stage. Through that stage it took them many, many years to pass, and only after they had fully gained that illumination were they allowed to pass into the third stage of Initiation. S. Paul said: "We speak wisdom among those that are perfect." In every Occult School there are things which can only be spoken to those of the higher degrees, others which can only be spoken to those who are pupils of the Masters. So, in early Christianity there were those three terms.

Do not, then, make the mistake that modern Christianity has made, and think that it is enough to be good and nothing else matters. You know very well that many good people, just because they were ignorant, have done a vast amount of harm in the world. We must not add to that disastrous number. On the contrary, we must try to add to our faith knowledge. We must endeavour to cultivate our mental bodies. Do not make the mistake of thinking that you can afford to ignore them. You must develop them —you must make them keen, active, useful. But why? Well, why does a carpenter sharpen his plane? Not in order that he may have a sharper plane than some other carpenter, but in order that it may cut the wood well, in order that his work may be well done. It is precisely for that reason that you must sharpen your instrument, train your mental body. You need it. We all need it badly. Train it with that thought

in view all the time, " I am making an instrument for the Master's work ". You will be free from spiritual pride, you will avoid many of the pitfalls into which intellectual development does undoubtedly lead people. Why do you want, for example, to develop a virtue? Not in order that you may be a virtuous man. No, but in order that through that virtue, through your possession of it, you may be of greater use to the Master. You must have that idea. The Master's work must dominate all in your mind. If you find any other thought than that, any other reason coming forward for doing anything, then that which is putting forward a reason is the mind—not you, the ego, an important distinction to make.

He says:

> This mind, even when you have turned it away from worldly things, still tries to calculate for self, to make you think of your own progress, instead of thinking of the Master's work and of helping others.

Yes, indeed it does; it is proud and separate, and when it has quite given up all the earthly kinds of pride, when it no longer takes any delight in the things in which ordinary men would take delight, it will then try to make you proud of your progress—your position in reference to the great Master, or something of that kind. When you have trodden that down, and got rid, as you think, of any pride in these things, then it will try to make you proud of not being proud. A most subtle

thing, this mental body—it is perpetually working, working—and if it does not get at you in one way, it will try to get at you in another way. Do not blame this elemental of yours—that is what it is—it has no idea of you, but it is simply seeking its own evolution and trying to get the variety, the kinds of vibrations which it needs for its own evolution.

He says:

> When you meditate, it will try to make you think of the many different things which *it* wants instead of the one thing which *you* want.

You see, He takes for granted the unity of purpose, He does not argue, He takes it for granted.

> You are not this mind, but it is yours to use; so here again discrimination is necessary. You must watch unceasingly, or you will fail.

That is very true. You need unceasingly to watch your emotions, but after a time you dominate those emotions so that your astral body will not allow itself any feelings but such as those you approve. But the mind is a more difficult proposition unquestionably to subdue; it is so active and so insinuating. It has the habit of association of ideas. Your most beautiful, your grandest, idea he will twist by association to carry you away to something quite different, quite trivial. It gives him a new set of vibrations which is the only thing he is seeking. You must watch him unceasingly, otherwise you will fail; and even if you do watch unceasingly,

you will still fail a great many times before you achieve success. They tell you in India the mind is the rajah or king of the senses, and that of all things he is the most difficult to control. I think you will find that to be true. In that respect we of the West are no better off than the Indian, I think perhaps a little worse; because we have been developing this lower mind and have prided ourselves upon the rapidity with which it could change from one subject to another. All true and all very necessary. But it must be subordinate to the one great idea; and if with us it is not so subordinate, then just to that extent we are not doing the highest we could do, we have still something to strive for, and a long time indeed it takes most of us to attain the final conquest over mind. But with the mental elemental, also, there is possibility of habit. Get him into a groove. (One speaks as though he were an intelligent entity; he is not that, and yet in many ways one understands him better if one treats him as though he were.) Get him to understand that you, the ego, intend to have this one dominant idea there all the time, but that in connection with that there are infinite ramifications, that there is nothing which cannot be brought into the service of the Master; and then presently this curious, unmanageable mental elemental will come to understand that, on the whole, he gets more by working with you, whom he does not understand, than by working against you; that, if he works with you, he

will get his multiplicity of kinds of thoughts, even though all the time you have, underlying it, the one dominant idea. Then, when you have got him into that frame of mind, he works pleasantly and harmoniously along with you.

All these things are methods of discrimination. Now He speaks of right and wrong—that was one of the lines of discrimination. He says:

> Between right and wrong Occultism knows no compromise.

If you think of it, you will find that ordinary life is to a large extent a series of compromises; that men constantly are doing a little less than they know to be right because they are thinking of what people would say. Most fatal sentence that—what other people would say! Perhaps it has done as much harm as any other similar number of words have ever done anywhere. Yet people, knowing well in a given case what they ought to do, shift it a little, tamper with it, fall short of it in order to make their passage smoother. Now there are, of course, certain difficulties which meet us here. We know very well that we do not want to antagonise anyone, that we do not want to hurt anyone's feelings, or to arouse his prejudices more than we can help. Still here stands the command, which we know in our hearts to be true:

> Between right and wrong, Occultism knows no compromise. At whatever apparent cost, that which is right

you must do, that which is wrong you must not do, no matter what the ignorant may think or say.

He says, you see, " At whatever apparent cost ". Remember it is always apparent cost, it is never a real cost. You never lose by doing that which to you seems right. You gain far more mentally and spiritually, by doing that which you know to be right than you can possibly gain physically by paltering with anything which you know not to be right. The cost is *always* apparent cost and never real. That is a very important thing. Remember the Upanishad: " One thing is the right and the sweet is another, but right unto sweet the wise man prefereth." That Upanishad was written in Atlantis thousands of years before the Hindus came down to India—not in Samskrit; it is a translation into Samskrit from some far older Atlantean time. The men of that day had the same difficulties as we have now. They knew that the right and the pleasant were not always identical, but that the wise man prefers the right. It was good counsel one hundred thousand years ago; it is equally good counsel now, a thing not to be forgotten in daily life. Take to heart, too, another passage somewhere else in this book in which it is said:

> Remember that though a thousand men agree upon a subject, if they know nothing about that subject their opinion is of no value.

Difficult to realise, but absolutely true. There is a vast amount of popular prejudice on all kinds of

subjects. Now I do not say that there is not often some ground of reason behind a popular prejudice. There very often is, if you dig deep down into it, not probably the reason the people are alleging at all, but some other reason; but there is very often a fragment of truth in these popular ideas. But also often we must admit that they are entirely unreasonable, and therefore we cannot take them into account, or allow them to influence us, so far as right and wrong go. If other people have their prejudices, as you can see they have—plenty of them—remember that you are liable to have your prejudices and your whims too; and never make the mistake of identifying your personal whims and prejudices with the right. That is a thing which it is often difficult to avoid doing. You have been brought along some particular line, and it has never occurred to you to question it. You are likely to think that the man who does not fall in with your particular method is therefore wrong. Perhaps he is, but also he may well not be; and that is why a little further on the Master says: "You must study deeply the hidden laws of Nature." This is in order that you may know what is right and what is wrong, what is important and what is unimportant. When you know that, then no compromise is possible for you; the right you must do, the wrong you must not do. But do not forget the end of that sentence, "and when you know them arrange your life according to them, using always

reason and common sense". That is a most important point to be borne in mind.

For reason and common sense are things, the lack of which we have often lamentably felt in our Theosophical Society. People have become so enthusiastic, and so rightly enthusiastic, that they have sometimes forgotten that reason and common sense must rule everything. You have something you want to do because you know it is a good thing to do. Very well, but do not charge at it like a bull at a gate, that is not the way to get good results; the bull possibly gets through at the cost of considerable damage to himself and to the gate. It is not the wisest way or the best way to do anything. You should always show sweet reasonableness in all that you do.

Remember that the Occultist never allows himself to be forced to do a wrong thing for fear of hurting other people's prejudices; but he will never offend those prejudices unnecessarily. If you have some piece of work to do, see what in that piece of work is the really important thing and attend to that; confine your attention largely to that. Remember, it is much harder to insist gently and tactfully than to insist angrily. If you let yourself get angry and stirred up about a thing, then you get a wave of emotion that carries you through; but to do the thing gently and quietly, without any emotion of hatred or any feeling against those who oppose, is a

much more difficult thing to do, and yet that is quite obviously the way to do it, just as surely as the other is not the way to get the thing done. You must not act from impulse, as the ordinary person acts. Most people act almost entirely on their impulses. They cannot bear this and that; they do not understand and they do not trouble to understand. They just drive ahead and take it for granted. Not only would it not be wise, it would not even be right for you who are Theosophists to act in that way. You must bring your reason to bear on the thing, you must use your common sense, and in so doing you will find that gradually, slowly, something higher than reason will develop within you. The intuition, buddhi, will come, but it can come only if at first you work at the reason as well as at the emotion. Reason and common sense you must have always.

You see how He emphasises this still further, on the next page:

> You must discriminate between the important and the unimportant. Firm as a rock where right and wrong are concerned, yield always to others in things which do not matter.

A very important thing. The things for which ordinary people care most are nearly always precisely the things which do not matter; you can afford to let them have those in many cases. As I say, if you are trying to get a piece of work done, see what part of that is the really important part, turn your mind

to that, and quietly and gently go along with that and get it done. Yield to other people in all the other parts, and then they will think what a delightfully yielding person you are and how pleasant you are to work with, and they will follow you in that part which is important, without knowing it. That is the difference between the fanatic and the Occultist. The fanatic never knows the difference between the important and the unimportant, he is equally insistent upon everything, he tries to ride rough-shod over people's prejudices, he rubs their fur the wrong way. And so they get set against him. He arouses their prejudices, so that they will not follow him in something really high and important, just because he has dealt with them in the wrong way. If you carefully stroke them the right way, they will purr contentedly and follow you. You call that tact in the outer world. In occultism it is a phase of discrimination, but it is a very necessary thing. Do you not see that you, who have come into this—I am talking to you as souls not as bodies—will have your opportunity, and surely you will take it, of working in the development of the Sixth Root Race some seven hundred years hence? You will quite certainly have that chance; I take it that you will accept it; you will be very foolish if you do not.

In the meantime many of you will have much to do with preparing the world for the coming of the World Teacher. Some of you will be alive when

He comes and will work under Him. Therefore do you not see that you will have to develop the qualities of leadership? There are not very many of us; I do not remember exactly the numbers; but there are over 40,000 in the world. However little we may like it, we shall have, to some extent, to take the position of leaders of others in the work of that Root Race, in the work, perhaps, of the coming of the Lord. Now the first necessity in a leader is this tact of which I am speaking to you. You must not antagonise the people whom you wish to help, whom you desire to get to help you in the work that has to be done, and therefore this sweet reasonableness must be practised. The fanatic often fails; the Occultist *always* succeeds in the end. He may appear to meet with a check, he may be thrown back for a time. You could not, perhaps, have a better instance of that, on a large scale, than the French Revolution. Those who stood at the back of the movement towards liberty in France were unable to control the mad passions of the people, and a time of terrible carnage ensued. The star set in blood for the time. But you will notice that, at the present day, France and many other countries have all the things for which those people were struggling, all the things that matter, all the freedom that is necessary and possible, at present, they have obtained. Those who promised such freedom were unable then to check the course of events. They may be said to have failed.

They have not failed. At any rate the result is there. So with all other great reforms that They introduce, with all other work that They do, They always succeed in the long run, even though not just at first. Now you will have to do just precisely that—never to be defeated, always to succeed—but to learn it you will have to acquire the art of helping people along, and not hammering them along. A great many good people want to do that. They want to drive everyone. It is not the way. Persuade them. You will get, not the same, but far better results, with much less friction and trouble. If you cannot get on with certain people, see what is the defect in yourself that prevents you from getting on with them. Do not bother about their faults, no doubt they have plenty; see what are the faults in yourself. You will probably find something if you look closely enough. There is always a reason for these things.

He says:

> For you must be always gentle and kindly, reasonable and accommodating, leaving to others the same full liberty which you need for yourself.

Of course, you will remember, all through this book, that it was spoken primarily to an Indian boy. I can see, and I dare say some of you, who are well acquainted with India, can also see special and immediate applications for many of these commands, many of these suggestions. You can see just how in the ordinary everyday Indian life, with its intense

conservatism, its hidebound superstition, a great many of these factors would come into play. But they are applicable to us also, applicable in all times and in all cases. He says: "Try to see what is worth doing." Do not waste your time on all the useless occupations of the worldly man or woman. Worldly people fill up their days with all sorts of things which, from our point of view, are valueless; yet which to them are of enormous importance. Some of these things are actually necessary physically; they are connected with earning their daily bread and so on. The things which to them are of the greatest importance are usually connected with the earning of more money, or with the obtaining of some position, to get a duke on their visiting list, to be invited to such and such a dinner or such and such a ball—those are the great aims in the lives of thousands of people. It is futile. None of these things matter in the least for us. We simply must not waste our time over all the thousand and one petty things which fill up the time of worldly people.

Then He says:

> Try to see what is worth doing: and remember that you must not judge by the size of the thing. A small thing which is directly useful in the Master's work is far better worth doing than a large thing which the world would call good.

You can see how that may be; the larger things are what our statesmen are doing to affect the whole

country. Think of some of the things that statesmen do. They may be very unimportant indeed. They are legislating about things which are infinitely unimportant, yet those would appear very big things as judged from the world's standpoint. Once more it is the old criterion which we must apply: "Is this thing for the Master's work?" There are things which are more useful, and there are things which are less useful. That is the one test for us to apply. Is it useful in the abstract? Is it useful in the Master's work? Remember all good work is the Master's work. Never forget that all good work, whether it is Theosophical or not, is the Master's work, and that many people are doing the Master's work who never heard of His name and have no idea of the evolution towards which their efforts are tending. But all the same we know. Because we have had the privilege of hearing a little more than most of those people, we can think of what we know the Master most desires, and therefore for us that is the one criterion. Is the work that we are doing such as He would approve, is it such work as will be useful for Him in the endeavour to promote evolution, and in the endeavour to help the world? That is what we must put before us, and if we can answer clearly and fully in the affirmative, then surely we may push on with that work; but first we must make sure that it is His work, done for His sake and in His name.

IX

February 9, 1915.

YOU will remember that we had been speaking about the difference between the important and the unimportant. The Master goes on to say:

> You must distinguish not only the useful from the useless, but the more useful from the less useful.

All good people try to do something to help the world in one way or another, and all such work is good work, and therefore it is truly the work of the Great Hierarchy, and so we may call it our Master's work without any fear of wrong. But there is some part of our Master's work which these men cannot do. He gives here an instance. He says:

> To feed the poor is a good and noble and useful work; yet to feed their souls is nobler and more useful than to feed their bodies. Any rich man can feed the body, but only those who know can feed the soul.

It has sometimes been brought as a reproach against the Theosophical Society that it does not engage itself in active philanthropic work such as the distribution of food and clothing to the poor. Some of our branches have done a good deal in that sort of

way, but it is not their principal work. Any man who is rich and kindly disposed can do that, but there is much work which only those who know can do. Now it may seem to some that to arrogate to ourselves the title of "Those who know" is in itself rather a conceited attitude to take. We ought not to do that, but the fact remains. We may or may not be intellectually superior to others; we can quite certainly see that there are very many people who have nothing whatever to do with Theosophy, who are intellectually very far in advance of many of us. (I always except our President of course, because she is a phenomenon.) The great scientific men are many times more intellectually powerful than any of our ordinary members are. No one could doubt that for a moment, while in spirituality and in devotion there are many Catholics and many members of other Christian sects, and of non-Christian religions, who are in every way quite as advanced as we along these lines. But still the fact remains. It has been our Karma to study these subjects and consequently, because of that study, we do know more about them than all these excellent people who have not studied them. They have gone along their lines, we along ours. They use such qualities as they have developed in order to help other people, and it has come to us to know and to understand Theosophy. That, therefore, is the great talent which is put into our

hands for use. If we do nothing with it—nothing for others, I mean—if we simply hug it to ourselves and enjoy all that it has brought us in the way of freedom from worry and trouble, comprehension of difficult problems and so on, then we are exactly like the man in the Bible who folded up his talent and buried it. But if we do our best to spread this Theosophical teaching and to help in every possible way, then at least we are putting out our talent at interest; and remember that it is those who have the knowledge who can give it. The splendidly intellectual man cannot teach people Theosophy, because he does not know it. He can teach them about electricity, astronomy and those things about which he does know; Theosophy he cannot teach, if he has not made a special study of it. It is for us therefore to utilise this power which we have. That is our special work. You will remember that, in the earlier part of this book, the Master divided the whole world into "The people who know and the people who do not know". By "the people who know" He did not mean, I think, those who possess the Theosophical knowledge, (though we may take it here in that sense) but those who know that God has a plan for men, and that plan is evolution, and therefore range themselves on God's side. He said that all who did that were our brothers and our helpers, and were one with us in the work that had to be done. But those who know are always in a minority. The

majority are always ignorant. It is in the nature of things that this should be so, because the great bulk of people are average people. Now I am not suggesting that you and I differ in any way from the average in our faculties, our mental powers, our devotional powers or anything of that sort. But we do differ from the average man in this, that we have this bent of mind which induces us to take up and study these things. It is our good karma from the past that we have been attracted by them before, and been interested, and so we are taking the opportunity to know more about them. We are different from the average in that respect, consequently that is the work that we can do. You, if you have the money, can go and buy food and clothing and distribute it to the poor. Yes. But any one who does not know Theosophy could do that just as well. There is something of priceless value that one man can do and the other man cannot do. You can feed the souls of the poor and the rich alike with your knowledge. Do not run away with the idea that that is in the least less practical than the other work. Men often say, "You talk about food for their souls; you do not quite know what you are doing, you talk to them about a quantity of things of which you do not really know very much, but I at least know what I am doing, I see a tangible result when I give them food. What is the cause of all the poverty and the suffering? The cause of it all is ignorance and selfishness: the

ignorance and the selfishness of men. If you attack the ignorance and the selfishness by trying to put knowledge before men, by trying to show them why they must necessarily be unselfish, then you are doing more from the most material point of view to bring about the welfare and the happiness of people on the physical plane, as well as on the higher planes, than merely by the distribution of food, which is good and necessary. No one would say for a moment that it should not be done. People must be fed or they will die. You must meet the need of the moment, but it is greater to attack the cause of all this, the cause of the material evil, just as much as the cause of the mental or emotional evil. If you can help people to get away from the position, the attitude which causes the evil, then you are working for the poor man and the hungry man just as truly as if you went in person and distributed the food, and furthermore you are doing more, because you are attacking the whole thing. You are doing what the physical plane helper could not do. Therefore, I say, do not misunderstand the position with regard to that. Wherever there has been any wisdom, any knowledge at all, those who know at all have been set free from the other work in order to teach. You will remember how there was some trouble in the early Christian Church, you may read of it in the Acts of the Apostles, about the distribution of their food supply, and the Apostles were indignantly appealed to, to settle

all this, to do it themselves, in fact. They said, " It is not reasonable that we should leave the Word of God to serve tables," and told other people to elect from among themselves those who would do these things, and abide by their decision, but not to expect them, whose business it was to expound the Word, to devote themselves to the purely physical side of things. Not that the purely physical side of things was to be neglected, but that the proper people were to do it, and that those who could do something so much greater should be left free to do that. Now that is true in its way of the Theosophical Society too. You could, every one of you, go and spend your days, as far as you could spare the time, in direct philanthropic labour among poor people, go and help in hospitals and so forth. But you are doing a better thing if you devote the same amount of time in trying to spread the higher knowledge. But you would say, " Some of us cannot yet go and lecture, nor can we write. What can we do to spread the higher knowledge ? " You all know that there are many Orders of Service in connection with the Society, that there is a great deal of work to be done which is necessary for the well-being of Theosophy and which does not necessarily involve either lecturing or writing. At any headquarters there is plenty for any one to do who wants to help, and any work whatsoever which promotes the existence and well-being of a Society like this, which exists for the

purpose of spreading the truth, is very emphatically and directly the Master's work, even if it only consists in the dusting of the place. All these things matter. They must be done, some one must do them. All are necessary, and so all are part of the Master's work. The people who can do the higher work cannot be spared from it because there are so few who can do it. It is like setting a great philosopher to break stones upon the road. Any strong man can break stones, but there are very few philosophers. And so it is with Theosophists. I regret to say, they are as yet few in proportion to the population, and there is an immensity of work for them to do—work of all sorts. Quite assuredly they should do it. You know that, in helping to spread Theosophy, you are striking at the root of all the evils in the world, because all come, as I have said, through ignorance and selfishness. The one thing, of course, which a member of the Theosophical Society must not do is to be idle, to do nothing, to sit down and say, "Because I cannot write, because I cannot yet speak, therefore there is nothing I can do." Create work for yourself which will help Theosophy. There are plenty of ways, if you will try to find them out. The officers of the Section exist for the purpose of finding work for all who are willing to work. It is a noble work to be working for the Master in however humble a capacity. He says here:

If you know, it is your duty to help others to know. However wise you may be already, on this Path you have

much to learn; so much that here also there must be discrimination, and you must think carefully what is worth learning. All knowledge is useful, and one day you will have all knowledge; but while you have only part, take care that it is the most useful part. God is Wisdom as well as Love; and the more wisdom you have, the more you can manifest of Him. Study then, but study first that which will most help you to help others.

You see how He advises study, but He tells you to choose so far as you can what will help you to help others. Now what will that be? Education you must have, you know, in order to help others tactfully, in order to enable you to present the truths properly and wisely. I know very well that there are many in the Society who find themselves, for various reasons, uneducated, but who are yet very earnest and devoted. Such people say, "Why should we bother about the details of education? We want to get at the reality of the thing, and present the truths somehow." Yes, but remember that the uneducated man is likely to present them in a very unacceptable form, in a form that would at once repel and estrange the educated and the cultured man, and assuredly we want to reach such people as these. We do not want it to be said that our presentation of Theosophy is such as to make it unacceptable to these people. No, it is distinctly and emphatically our duty to make our presentation as nearly perfect as we can make it. I know that people say that an intuitional man, who

hears the thing badly put, will rise above the form to the truth that lies behind; but you will remember that most men are not intuitional, and that you have no right, for the sake of any laziness of your own, to put an additional obstacle in the way of anyone who might otherwise be induced to take an interest in the thing. I suppose you can hardly realise how many people are reasonably near the position where they might make rapid progress, if only they could be awakened to it. I have myself, I suppose, seen it most among the young, because my work generally lies there. I see boys and girls by the score almost, in any country, who would make good progress along Theosophical lines, if the thing could only be put before them. It is not, of course. They plunge off into the ordinary work-a-day life, and become very good people of the ordinary type, and they will go on being good people of the ordinary type for twenty or thirty incarnations, or more than that, just because it has not been brought their way. They are capable of taking it up, they could be interested in it, if it were properly put before them. Surely that state of affairs throws a serious responsibility upon Theosophists. It is our business to be capable and ready to put these things forward on all possible occasions when we even think it possible that they might do some good. There are plenty of people who might just as well enter upon Theosophical development now, as in twenty lives. You

would say it is a question of their karma. Surely also it is a question of our karma whether we give them the opportunity. If you do your best to put the thing before a set of people, and after all they cannot take it, then you have done your part, but until you have done your best, you do not know whether it is their karma to be helped or not. True, if it is their karma to receive it, you will say, some one will come and help them, but you are going to give the Hierarchy the trouble of fetching somebody out of another land or city. It is our business to fit ourselves to do the work properly. We do not wish that Theosophy should be spoken ill of because of our personal defects or disabilities. If you are set to do work for the Society and do not do it satisfactorily, then go to work and learn to do it satisfactorily. If you are asked to read something and cannot do it, learn how to do it properly. If you cannot lecture,—presently, when you know enough and take the trouble to prepare, you will learn to do that. But, at any rate, be doing something and try to do it well. It is our duty as Theosophists to master the correct grammar and the correct expression which will enable us to put these things acceptably before the people that we wish to reach. Any truth, however glorious, may be eclipsed, if clumsily and wrongly put. It is our duty to do our best in this matter. We must be educated if we are

to present these truths properly, and as He says here:

> Work patiently at your studies, not that men may think you wise, not even that you may have the happiness of being wise,

because that is a great happiness,

> but because only the wise man can be wisely helpful. However much you may wish to help, if you are ignorant you may do more harm than good.

You know that is so, because you know that history has taught us that quantities of good people, with the best intentions, have blundered in the most terrible manner and have injured their cause, whatever it might have been, far more than any outside attack could injure it. We must learn to be as perfect as we can in our presentation, so that we may not lower Theosophical truths in the public estimation, a very important point. Then He says:

> You must distinguish between truth and falsehood; you must learn to be true all through, in thought and word and deed.

That is the occult order always. Thought first. You must be true in thought, or your words and deeds cannot be true. Always you will notice that comes first in the Buddha's teaching; first right thought, then right speech, then right action. Only when you have the basis right can you build securely

and safely upon it, and the basis is the thought. He says:

> In thought first; and that is not easy, for there are in the world many untrue thoughts, many foolish superstitions, and no one who is enslaved by them can make progress.

Well, you know, that is so. We have what is called "public opinion". Now, on the whole and in many ways, public opinion is quite often right, but on the other hand there are clear instances in which it is hopelessly and absurdly wrong. The average man or woman never thinks of cases of that sort, but simply accepts the popular idea. Now it will not do for us to do that. It will not do for us to take our thoughts and opinions at second hand. We must think things out for ourselves. Only what you think out and understand can really be said to be your own at all. All sorts of superstitions there are about us, you know. Everyone of your good, earnest, religious people, pious and benevolent, leading a pure, good, beautiful life, and doing much good work in the world, yet has his superstitions, and often these superstitions hold him back. He thinks his own particular ceremonies, or his own particular modes of thought are of consequence, whereas in reality they do not matter in the least. They are of no importance whatever. Even Theosophists have their superstitions. We think in Theosophy that we are absolutely free from these, I am not quite sure. There is a possibility, it seems to me, of a Theosophical

superstition too, and we had better guard against that. The man who believes a thing because he says, "Thus saith the Lord," "It is written in the Bible," is no doubt superstitious to that extent, because he has no good basis for that belief. He is taking the unessential for the essential, and that is the basis of all superstition. But remember that it is only one step forward from that superstition to say, "Thus says Madame Blavatsky; it is written in *The Secret Doctrine*." It is a step I admit, because there is a great deal more evidence that Madame Blavatsky knew what she was talking about than, let us say, S. Paul did, or any of the older writers. But the thing is no more your own because Madame Blavatsky said it than because S. James or S. Peter said it, unless you understand it and make it part of yourselves, grow into it and let it grow into you. So long as you are only reading things parrotwise, those things are only superstition. The very belief in the thing may be a superstition, if it have no better basis than that it is written here or there. You have to understand a thing for yourselves. When it becomes a part of your mental system you can say, "It is part of me, it is mine, and I know why I believe in it, and therefore my belief in it is an intelligent belief, and not merely superstition." I am afraid there is a great deal of unintelligent belief even in the truth, in many cases. Of course you can easily take example after example of the way in which the essential and

the non-essential may be separated. Here your Catholic friends say Masses for their dead; go over to India and you will find our Hindu brothers performing what is called the *Shraddha* ceremony for the dead. Widely different as they are, yet they are both ceremonies intended to help the departed, and they both do help the departed, there is no shadow of doubt about that. Now the Catholic would cling to the form of his Mass, but in clinging to these forms he would be clinging to superstition. There is no superstition in doing that which helps the dead; that is a real and a beneficent act. The act itself is the essential thing, with the goodwill and the earnestness put into it and the love poured out towards the departed. These are the real things, and these produce the result, but the mere outer garment is unimportant. The garment of the Mass in black and silver, or the offerings of the balls of rice, these do not matter, they are only the outward forms. Clinging to them would be superstition, but the ceremony itself, the truth that that lies behind it, that is a fact in nature, not a superstition. It may not be a bad thing to examine your own minds, even you who are Theosophists, and see how much of your mental furniture you can definitely claim as belonging to yourselves—how much you believe because a great many other people believe it, how much you believe because it is written in some sacred book, how much you believe merely ancestrally without ever having thought about it.

Now in every case your religion (I am thinking of the religion into which you were born) came to you merely because other people believed in it. You were born into a Presbyterian family and you accepted the Presbyterian ideas, just because your father happened to be a Presbyterian, and not in the least because you had examined all the others and believed that was the best. You were born a Catholic or a Presbyterian, just as you were born an Australian, or an Englishman, and you had no more to do with the one than the other. That is difficult for us to bear in mind. So people are born into religions as they are born into countries. All such things as these people accept, not because they have thought them out, but because some one else holds the belief. It is the same with a great number of popular ideas. People say that such and such a thing is improper. When you go out to dinner you must wear a certain dress. Very well, it is the custom, and one does not want to go against custom in a matter which is of no importance. It is no good making oneself conspicuous. But you must clearly understand that it is not a case of right and wrong. It is merely a question of popular ideas. In the case of all things you should know how much they are worth, how far they are important. Too often people let their superstitions shut the door against the reception of the real truth. I was talking only a few days ago to a lady who seemed very much interested in Theosophy;

but the great difficulty was that she could not make it square with the New Testament, and of course the New Testament overrode everything in her eyes. That is an instance of superstition. The New Testament is a wonderful Scripture, no one who has read it would deny that. But to set it up, or to set up any book, as a final court of appeal against your reason or your common sense, is superstition. You must be prepared to take everything on its own merits, for what it is worth, whether it is in the New Testament or *The Secret Doctrine.* Take the thing on its own merits, examine it for yourself, and then perhaps you may claim to know something about it. That is what is said here:

> Therefore you must not hold a thought just because many other people hold it, nor because it has been believed for centuries, nor because it is written in some book which men think sacred; you must think of the matter for yourself, and judge for yourself whether it is reasonable.

Now those are the words of our Master Koot Hoomi. They were also 2,500 years ago the words of the Lord Gautama Buddha. When men came to Him asking Him: "There are so many Teachers and so many doctrines put before us, and they all seem good. How are we to know which is the best, how can we decide between them?" Remember the memorable answer which the Lord Buddha gave: "Do not believe anything because it is written

in a sacred book. Do not believe anything because it is handed down to you by tradition. Do not believe anything because good and holy people tell it to you. Do not believe anything because it comes to you as a presumed spiritual inspiration from within. Do not believe what I, The Buddha, tell you unless it agrees with your own common sense, and when it does, act accordingly and abundantly." These are the words of the Lord Buddha, the wisest of men, the Great Lord of Wisdom. Surely we can apply them in the present day. Here you have them in a very slightly modified form by your own Master. He says:

> Remember that though a thousand men agree upon a subject, if they know nothing about that subject their opinion is of no value.

That is a thing which it is very hard for the modern world to realise. It is a lesson which it has yet to learn. People seem to think nowadays that, if you only pile up enough ignorance, you will somehow get knowledge out of it. But you do not, and presently the modern world will have to learn that fact. What our President has called "the many-millioned ignorance" can only lead it sadly wrong.

The ignorant must have those who know how to direct them, and not, specially and with intention, those who do not know,—which seems to be the present scheme. Well, one has to learn bit by bit. This superstition is a very big and a very subtle thing;

you can see that from the fact that you are not expected to be free from it until after the First Initiation. It is the third of the fetters which a man must cast off on the path of Probation. When he has taken that step which makes him a member of the Mighty Brotherhood which makes him safe for ever, then, before he can take the second step, he must cast off three fetters: (1) The delusion of self, (2) Doubt as to certain great central truths, (3) Superstition. The Pali is "Silabbataparamasa," belief in the efficacy of rites or ceremonies of any kind. So you see a man might well be quite far on and yet be fettered by this deep and subtle superstition. No, it is a far-reaching thing; for a man who is otherwise qualified to take the First Initiation may obviously have something of it still clinging to him. Since the final getting rid of it is set for a later stage, it is clear that he might even take the First Initiation with some fragment of it still about. Verily it is a thing of which we have to be careful. That is evident. He says:

> He who would walk upon the Path must learn to think for himself, for superstition is one of the greatest evils in the world, one of the fetters from which you must utterly free yourself.

He has been making a very great point of this truth in thought, and here on the twenty-second page He takes up another branch of that:

> Your thought about others must be true; you must not think of them what you do not know.

That is so. If you think of other people what you only suppose about them, your thought is untrue. You are departing from perfect truth. Now, you know that most people do that all day long. They are constantly babbling about the doings of other people, and most of it is the merest speculation. We really know remarkably little about those who are very near to us, still less about casual acquaintances, and yet you know how much profitless talk there is constantly about the sayings and doings, and about supposed thoughts, even, of those acquaintances. Half the time the whole thing is hopelessly untrue. You are attributing to those other people something of which perhaps they have never thought. Then again a very interesting line is taken here: "Do not suppose that they are always thinking of you." It must have come in your way to see how perpetually that mistake is made. Now whatever some other person says or does is taken as referring to ourselves. Because we are always thinking of ourselves, we imagine that other people must be always thinking of us also. But if you are always thinking of yourself, you had better assume that other people are always thinking of themselves too, not that they are thinking about you. They make themselves the centre of their own circle, the centre round which all their thoughts and ideas and emotions revolve. They think of everything as it affects themselves. They are running round themselves in a circle

as it were, all the time; and because they are running round themselves, they think that everyone else must be running round them too. But they are not. Each man is in his own circle—an equally vicious one, no doubt. Probably nine-tenths of the cases, in which people take offence at what other people say and do, are rooted in this idea:

> If a man does something which you think will harm you, or says something which you think applies to you, do not think at once: "He meant to injure me". Most probably he never thought of you at all, for each soul has its own troubles, and its thoughts turn chiefly round itself.

That is plain common-sense, yet how few people ever practise it. I can remember an instance when the thing came home to me very forcibly. When I was a Priest, one afternoon, in our Parish Church down in the country, I preached a sermon. I really forget what the subject was—it was about some ordinary trial and temptation, which I thought might come in the way of the farmers and the labourers, who were my congregation. I explained how a man got into trouble along that line. After the service a farmer came to the vestry in a towering rage and asked me what I meant by preaching a sermon directed at him. Of course, poor man, he gave himself away hopelessly. I had never before supposed him to be guilty of this particular thing, but evidently it was a sore point—the thing had gone home. I expect to this day the poor man thinks that I had singled him out. He said all his men were

laughing at him. Perhaps they were. People take things to themselves that the speaker had not the remotest conception of. "Most probably he never thought of you at all," as it is said here. Not only that, but suppose a man speaks angrily to you, he may not be angry with you at all, he may simply be overstrained, so that all his nerves are on edge. It is a common thing in these days. Half of the quarrels and the troubles arise from that. Do not misjudge a man. Probably some one else has annoyed him. He has his own troubles and sufferings, and they are probably hard enough to bear. He is not angry with you at all. You happen to be the first person that comes his way and you discharge his battery, so to speak. Therefore, first of all, do not misjudge the angry man, and secondly do not get angry yourself, because, if you do, the two things exacerbate one another, and the situation will get worse. "A soft answer turneth away wrath," according to Solomon, who may perhaps have been wise upon some points. Remember always that it is not necessarily anger against you that stirs up the man, but you happen to come that way at that moment. Take it calmly and philosophically and, if you are not perfectly sure, give him the benefit of the doubt. In most cases that will be right. There may be a few cases, when a man is really objectionable, but he is the person to be pitied, and not you, because karma is just, and though the mills grind

slowly yet they grind exceeding small, and you may be sure that he will suffer. Take every thing therefore calmly and philosophically. Remember also, that you are in danger of nerve tension and overstrain at these hard times. Therefore be on your guard. The Theosophist ought to be distinguishable from the rest of the world by his calmness, as well as by his unchanging cheerfulness, which the Master Koot Hoomi said ought to make us recognisable. Be gentle, be patient. There is always time for everybody to be gentle and friendly, you know, however much you may be hurried, and the world would be a far happier place if they were. Decline to allow yourself to be swept off your feet by these gusts of passion, which really come from overstrained nerves. It is one of the great dangers and difficulties of the present day, and you, who know a little more about these things, ought really to be on your guard against them.

X

February 16, 1915.

WE were considering the instructions given on pages 22 and 23, that our thoughts about others must be true—that we must not think of them what we do not know, and so on.

You see, in this crowded life in which we are all living it is inevitable that there should be a certain amount of friction. But this need not be taken seriously, or regarded as of great importance. You know, as you walk among the crowded streets of this great city, hundreds, thousands of people, each thinking of his own business, are pushing ahead and not thinking of others. Inevitably it happens that people jostle you. You, perhaps, do the same to others, pushing to get on board of boats or to get into trams. It does not occur to you to take that kind of thing seriously, to think that it is meant to insult you. To do so would be ridiculous. It is the inevitable result of a great crowd of people, more or less preoccupied. Theoretically it ought not to happen, but practically it happens a dozen times a day, and none of us takes the least notice of it. Do you not see that the same thing is bound to happen mentally and emotionally? Where there are great crowds, there is inevitably a

certain amount of mental and emotional jostling. We ought to take that in exactly the same spirit, realising that the man who happens to tread on our mental corns, so to speak, did not mean to do so in the very least, that he was following his own line of business and not thinking of us. We ought to understand that a certain amount of friction is inseparable from these dense crowds and all the hurry and rush of these modern days. It is not an ideal condition, but there it is. We have been born into it ; it is our karma. Without sacrificing very much more than ourselves, we could not get away from it. We are in a position where we are practically tied down by karmic obligations, and we have to remain. Therefore we must make up our minds to put up with these not very pleasant conditions, and not take all such little frictions as serious things, any more than we take the daily jostling in the streets as a serious thing. In many cases a little ordinary commonsense, a little give and take, would avoid much trouble and worry. We must try, on our side, to think of others and to be more courteous, kindly and careful than most people are, but we must not expect all outsiders to be thinking of getting out of our way, because they are not thinking of us at all.

Then passing away from that subject, we come to this sentence :

> When you become a pupil of the Master, you may always try the truth of your thought by laying it beside His.

For the pupil is one with his Master, and he needs only to put back his thought into the Master's thought to see at once whether it agrees. If it does not, it is wrong, and he changes it instantly, for the Master's thought is perfect, because He knows all. Those who are not yet accepted by Him cannot do quite this.

That of course is true, but yet I think it cannot be otherwise than interesting to you to realise how the pupil is related to his Master. You see it is said, "The pupil is one with his Master." Now, that is true in a sense which only the Master knows perfectly. The pupil knows it too, but less perfectly. Those who have not yet entered that relation naturally cannot understand the intensity of that oneness. The pupil becomes an outlying section of his Master's thought, belonging to Him in a way not at all unlike that in which the personality belongs to the individuality. The individuality puts down a small piece of itself—that is not quite a correct statement, but it is more correct than the idea of reflection would be—it puts down a small part of itself into conditions where that small part can be only a very imperfect expression of itself, of the ego on its own plane. (That at least ought to be some sort of comfort to you, when you fall aghast at your various weaknesses down here, you can say to yourself: "At any rate the ego, at least, knows better than that, therefore I need not despair, it is only needful for me to bring down more of myself into this lower manifestation to make it more perfectly a

manifestation of what I really am up above; and then my troubles will become less.") In the same sort of way the pupil represents the Master, is the Master in a very real sense, but the Master under limitations, under tremendous limitations—not only the limitations of the lower planes, but also the limitations of the personality of the pupil, which is by no means transcended. If his individuality had perfectly gained control of its lower vehicles so that they were nothing but reflections of the higher, then he would be able to express the Master very much more perfectly than he does now; but even then there would be limitations of himself—of the "size" of him, so to speak, because he is a smaller person than the Master whom he follows. Men always fall short of even what the expression of the Master might be here on the physical plane, of what it would be in the Master's own physical body for example. Nevertheless, it remains true that the pupil is definitely a part of the Master, so that, whatever thoughts and feelings the pupil has, these are in the Master's mental and astral bodies also. That you see is the reason of the period of probation through which all pupils have to pass, a period during which, as you have often read no doubt, the living image of the probationary pupil is constantly before the eyes of the Master. Before He puts Himself in such a position as that with anyone down here on these lower planes, He wants to know exactly what are the thoughts and feelings of that

person, because otherwise He might find constantly obtruded into His own astral and mental bodies thoughts and emotions which He did not want, which were out of harmony with the work which He is doing all the time. So that it is only after He has seen for some considerable time that such thoughts and emotions as would not harmonise are very rare in the pupil, that He accepts him and makes him a part of Himself. He still retains the power to erect a wall, to drop a veil between His consciousness and that of His pupil; and if the latter should now and then make a mistake he would be shut off. It is the pupil's earnest desire not to be shut off; but still we are very fallible people, down here on the physical plane, and it may very often happen that something comes to us which should not. The Master does not want that; He shuts it quietly away from Him. There is, it is true, a later period at which the Master renounces the right and the power to do that, when He accepts the pupil as His son. That is only when He is quite sure that there will be nothing that needs to be excluded. So it is true that the pupil is one with the Master, one with an intimacy which, outside of Occultism, is not understood; and that is why the pupil may lay his thought by the side of the Master's thought. Remember, it is not necessary to call the Master's attention at all; it is not asking the Master's opinion on the question in hand. No, it is simply going back along the line of that oneness to see what is the

thought in the Master's mind, with regard to this particular question. "How," you would say, "would the pupil do it?" In various ways, according to the extent to which he has realised the oneness. He makes, as you all make, a vivid image of his Master, and then he raises himself into it with all his force—making himself one with that, as he is entirely one with the Master Himself, and then, having done that, would think his thought and see whether there was the slightest jar in feeling, and if there were he would alter it at once. You see, there is the difference between the Occult and the worldly attitude. Here, if you find a difference of opinion between yourself and another man, you at once proceed to argue in favour of your opinion, to try to justify it. In Occultism we never argue. In Occultism we know that the man who stands on a higher level knows better, and we do not waste any time at all in arguments, we simply accept his opinion as right. We think it out afterwards and find out why it is right. You must not suppose we take anything merely blindly, but it would never occur to us to argue with Him. You will remember how someone said to a Roman Emperor, "It is no use arguing with the master of fifty legions." Just as on the physical plane you cannot argue with a man who has such an enormous army at his command, so in the mental world you cannot argue with one who knows all, who has transcended *Avidya*, or ignorance. That is why

it would never occur to us for one moment to set up our own opinion against that of the Master, because we know, (it is not a matter of opinion but of actual knowledge) that He has access to all kinds and sources of information that we have not; therefore He knows what He is talking about. Afterwards we may set to work to try to find the reasons which caused his opinion—that is quite another matter—but in the mean time we do not oppose it, it would never occur to us to do so. It would indeed be like a very small schoolboy setting up his opinion against that of the Principal of the College. The Principal knows what he is talking about, the small boy's misunderstanding is not in the question. It is exactly the same with the pupil and the Master; but the wise pupil will find out why the Master does so and so. In a minor degree we see the same thing on the physical plane. I have found many members of the Society setting up their opinions on all sorts of points against that of our President. They have every right to their opinion, but it is rather a foolish thing, considering where our President stands. About everything Theosophical she must know a great deal more than they do; therefore her opinion is entitled to a very much greater weight. It does not occur to me to set up my opinion against hers. It may seem to me that I might do things a little differently in this way or that; it is a matter of opinion. I never criticise her in any way. She has a certain position to hold, which

karma has given her, because she is the best person for it. It is her business to hold it, and not mine. That, you see, is always our attitude in the occult world. We never criticise; we take it for granted that every man who is working for the Hierarchy is doing his utmost, is doing his very best; and if he is doing his best, then to his own Master he stands or falls, not to us. If we see failure of some sort or other, as we do perhaps under certain circumstances, it may be possible, in the most delicate way, to make a little suggestion: "Perhaps if so and so were done, do not you think things might be a little better?" The way in which worldly people recklessly criticise others, of whose troubles and difficulties they know nothing whatever, is entirely foreign to us and to our whole line of life and thought. We simply do not go along that way at all. We should consider it wrong.

It is wrong for us at any rate, whether it be so for the outer world or not. You would do well to follow the custom of pupils in this matter. Do not plunge into criticism of people who are doing their work. They are doing the best they can from their point of view. You may, quite possibly, have a much higher point of view, but at any rate they can work only according to their own light, not according to yours; therefore let them do their best. You appoint an official to do something, in the Society. Let him do it; give him his chance. If you do not

like the way he does it, appoint some one else when the time comes; in the meantime do not hamper the man. Give him a chance to show what he is made of and to try the ideas which are in his mind. It is a bad thing to be always interfering; it is a very much worse thing to be always in a critical frame of mind, always to be looking out for holes, always trying to find weak spots. That is not our way in occultism. I know how entirely different this is from the custom of the present day, how absolutely opposite it is to the way of the world. I cannot help it; we are trying to live a different life. People say: "I cannot help criticising. That is in my nature." It may be your nature, but it is a very bad nature. You had better try to transcend it. Remember that, when you say a thing is natural, is human, you mean that it is what the average man of the world would do. No doubt, but surely you are trying to be a little more than the average man, or why should you be here? You are taking your character in hand; you are practising meditation day by day, and year by year. If at the end of all that time, you are to come out at the level of the average man, you have been wasting your time. You might have employed it to better advantage in some other way. As a matter of fact, you are seeking to raise yourself above the average, in order that you may be able to help that average; for you cannot help it if you are on the same level, or below. You are trying to be—we will not say

supernatural, because that is not a very good word to use—you are trying to be something above the level of the ordinary average human nature. It should be a more God-like nature that you are seeking to show forth. So to say that a thing is human nature, that it is natural, is no excuse. You ought to be a bit better than that. To say that you cannot help it, if you are in the habit of criticising, if you are in the habit of attributing motives to other people, is simply feeble. If you say that, you are not in earnest. You do not really mean to conquer the thing. If you say you cannot help it, you are saying an untrue thing. You can help it. The thing to say is, " I can and I will ". It is not manly to sit down and say you cannot help it. Such an attitude belongs to the lower nature altogether. You are pandering to the lower self; you are putting your lower self in the place of the real. Sometimes one would like to say to people, " Do get out of the way of your Higher Self and give him a chance to do what he can; because it is the lower personality that you are letting stand in the way of what the higher would and could do quite easily." No one should ever say, " I cannot ". If you take that line, and say you cannot, then you have already prejudged the case. You have foredoomed yourself to failure. You have set up a thought-form; and that thought-form will overpower your lower self. Set up the thought-form, " I can do this thing and I will do it ", and it is already half done. There is a

tremendous difference between these two attitudes;—between that of the person who sits down and despairs and that of the person who gets up and does something. It has been said that the world has been divided into two parts: the people who go and do something and the other people who sit down and say, "Why was it not done in some other way?" We who are Theosophists ought to be amongst the people who get up and do things. We ought not to mind in the least what the people think who say, "Why was it not done in some other way?" but never move a hand to do it themselves. That should not be our attitude. As we do not criticise our fellows, we should never dream of imagining that our thought may be right when it differs from the Master's. We should at once say, "He knows." We do not argue about that. Then He says:

> Those who are not yet accepted by Him cannot do quite this; but they may greatly help themselves by stopping often to think: "What would the Master think about this? What would the Master say or do under these circumstances?" For you must never do or say or think what you cannot imagine the Master as doing or saying or thinking.

If there were nothing else written in this book, that sentence alone would be worth all that has been said about the book. If you could keep that always in your mind, if you could never think or say or do anything that the Master would not think or say or do, there would not be much need of correction in your life. You might make some error perhaps, as to what you

thought He might think or say or do, but on the whole it would be a wonderfully pure life, wonderfully near to Him. But to think that always before you do or say or feel anything may perhaps seem, to a certain extent, a tie. I dare say many people might complain: "If I had to stop and think that, I would never say anything." Well, you know, the world would probably not be greatly the poorer if you did not. That is a thing that people often forget. Most of what is said in the world is not particularly useful permanently, if you come to think of it. A very great deal of it might be left unsaid and no harm done to any one. It is very true that, if you really seriously set yourself to think, each time before you speak, "Would the Master say what I am going to say?" you will say a very great deal less. It may be a very slow business at first. You have to think constantly and debate the point within yourself, and it will end mostly by your not saying what you intended to say. So much the better. Presently that becomes a habit, that reference of everything to the thought of the Master, and instead of requiring definite effort or attention it comes like a flash. You know, thought is exceedingly rapid. Thought moves probably with the rapidity of light. That perhaps sounds odd to you, but please remember that thought is a vibration just as definitely as light is, and that we have tested the speed of thought as well as we can. It is a very difficult thing to do. You think of England. So far

as your thought is concerned you are in England, 12,500 miles away; so would a flash of light be. It is probable that many of these vibrations travel at the same rate; whether thought is actually faster than light we do not actually know. I am inclined to think myself that it is, but I do not bother you with that at all, because, after all, it is only an opinion, I have not any very definite basis on which to found it; because you can think of a thing at a distance without your thought actually reaching it. Those are questions of occult physics amidst which we are stumbling as yet. We are trying all the time to learn new facts about occult science of various kinds. We are making experiments blunderingly, much as the old alchemists used to make experiments, and out of their blundering experiments emerged the beginning of Chemistry. Just in the same way, I myself believe that out of these stumbling experiments, which are now being made by a few people, will arise, as the years roll on, Occult Science generally, which will be of stupendous importance to the world; but at present we are only at the beginning of it. We can tell you only very little about it, and much of what we can advance about these things is put forward very hesitatingly, because we know that we are only at the beginning. Yet such a Science exists; and you might just as well discuss the probable rate of vibrations of thought as of light or Röntgen rays, or any of these cases. Thought moves with exceeding rapidity,

though this is true chiefly of pure thought, unmixed with anything else. Mostly our thoughts do not move so fast as all that. We have not practised using them apart from speech and action to any great extent. This, incidentally, is one of the values of your meditation, that it teaches you to use thought apart from these other things. When you get somebody who can use thought apart from speech and action you get wonderful results. Take our President: she wrote "Thought Power, its Control and Culture". She has made a study of this thing; she knows something about it. I have heard her say that, when she is giving a lecture in public (she never hesitates for words, she is wonderfully fluent and eloquent) while she is speaking one sentence to the people, the next sentence she is going to speak comes before her thought in two or three different forms, and she deliberately selects that one which she thinks will be most effective while she is speaking the previous sentence. We cannot do that, at least I cannot, and I take it you cannot either. It is a matter of using your thought apart altogether from action, using it with a rapidity which you could hardly calculate. That shows you what may be done. It is quite worth your while to try to practise using your thought as thought. Of course, in such a thing as this which is advised here, you will find that excellent practice. Thinking before you speak, before you act, would be difficult at first; it would be

very slow, and there would be a noticeable hesitation; and probably you would say very little. But with a little practice you would find that the answer would come like a flash. That is not only a very great gain, because of the test you had applied to it beforehand, but it is useful in training your thought to act with lightning-like rapidity.

The Master goes on with very much, in fact, of what I have already said:

> You must be true in speech too—accurate and without exaggeration. Never attribute motives to another.

That is a very important thing. I should say that more than half of the trouble and ill-feeling in the world would be saved if we could only follow that. You hear that a person has said or done something; you immediately supply him with a motive, and this is generally an evil motive. Then you proceed to blame that unfortunate man for what *you* have thought; his motive may be absolutely different, but you credit him with one and then blame him.

> Only his Master knows his thoughts, and he may be acting from reasons which have never entered your mind.

It is wonderful how often that is so. Every man is an enigma to those who are nearest and dearest to him, you know; but sometimes you can get all his reason—long afterwards, usually. It is in most cases a revelation, something that you never would have dreamt of. I have seen that many times myself.

more perhaps in India than anywhere else, because the Indian mind differs greatly from ours in many ways. It is infinitely more subtle; and not only that —it is based on history and a set of traditions absolutely foreign to our ideas and our ways of thought, so that, while here among yourselves it is never safe to supply a motive for what another says or does, it is even less safe in a country like that, where you are dealing with another civilisation altogether. Most actions of our Hindu brothers are prompted by ideas that could never have occurred to an Englishman. So hopeless misunderstandings arise because you supply motives. Do not do it. It is not your business to decide why a certain thing was done; so do not bother about it. Leave the man alone. To his own Master he stands or falls, not to you.

To say you cannot change your nature is futile. We are here to change our natures. Assuredly it is of no use sitting down and crying to the Master for help, if you will not help yourself. If you will not put your own shoulder to the wheel, what is the use of asking God to help you? In exactly the same way, here, the man who will not make the determined effort to help himself will gain nothing.

Of course people often fail in their efforts. That is very natural. Do you not see that, while you are continually trying, you are gathering force, and that the force which you are gathering will presently make you not fail but succeed? Do not think that, when a

failure comes, everything is over. Not in the least. The force which you have gained is not enough to conquer, but it is a substantial something. Go on adding more to it, and the time will come when success will crown your efforts. The worldly man would say probably, "God gave me this nature and what can I do? It is too difficult." Of course it is difficult to uproot yourself and change fundamental things in you. It is our business to do the things which are a little too difficult for the outer world. You cannot expect the worldly man to take himself in hand. First of all, he does not see why he should, and he does not think that he can with success. We see why we should, and we know that we can. Consequently we take ourselves in hand and we work at it. Here in this book we have definite instructions from the Master. He would not tell you to do anything that is not possible. So if you find it definitely ordered, go and do it—that is, if you want to make progress. He goes on:

> If you hear a story against any one, do not repeat it; it may not be true and even if it is, it is kinder to say nothing.

He speaks much more about that later on in the book when He comes to deal with the sin of gossip. Here is quite a definite instruction from Him. Surely you can obey that. "If you hear a story do not repeat it." It is quite difficult to control your thought—of course it is, but it is quite easy to hold

your tongue. You know it is quite easy not to tell that story. It is impossible to say that you cannot do that. You can do it. There is a definite order for you. If you wish to reach the feet of the Master you had better obey the hints that He gives you. I know very well that some of these stories do not amount to much; only, remember that He is talking about truth in speech. If you tell that story and it is untrue, you are telling a lie. Now, you may say that it is hard, for you do not mean any harm. But think a moment. Are you telling the truth? If you are not telling the truth, you are telling an untruth. You must face facts. You may say that you did not mean to. That is a very feeble excuse. You cannot possibly sift the truth of everything that you hear. The only safe way is not to repeat. You must face the facts; mere conventional ideas are of no use.

Why should you wish to harm a person? Why should you wish to give an unpleasant impression of that person to some one else? Even if you know it is true it is kinder to say nothing. "Think well before speaking, lest you should fall into inaccuracy." People talk in a wildly exaggerated way about things. If a thing is a hundred yards off, they say it is "miles off". If you get a day that is hotter than others, they say it is boiling hot. They think that this kind of thing does not matter. The Christ is reported to have said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they

shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." That statement is entirely right. We have no right to speak inaccurately. People in the outer world do it and do not mean any harm. Let them do what they choose; we, at least, should aim at a certain amount of accuracy. After all it is very poor language which cannot express itself without ridiculous superfluities. Our command of English is very bad if we are not able to find words to express different gradations without plunging into these wild meaningless superlatives. It is a lack of education as well as a lack of accuracy, and I do not think we ought to be careless about this matter.

There are a great many little things like that in daily life, about which most people do not think. We ought to think about them.

> Be true in action; never pretend to be other than you are, for all pretence is a hindrance to the pure light of truth, which should shine through you as sunlight shines through clear glass.

Now it is quite true that we should never pretend. There is a falsity about any kind of pretension. But take care that, in your effort to avoid pretence, you do not run into the opposite extreme. Sometimes people say, "I want to show myself just as I am naturally," and then they proceed to show the worst and coarsest and most vulgar part of themselves. They are not showing themselves as they are naturally; they are showing a very low and degraded

copy of what they should be. That in you which is highest and noblest and best is nearest to the real self. Remember that always, and if you want to be natural then you should be at your best. Be natural —yes, but see to it that what is natural to you is the best you can get; make that natural to you. Remember that it is of no small consequence how you make yourself appear in the eyes of others. Most distinctly you should not make pretence. Yet bear in mind that every member of the Theosophical Society represents the Theosophical Society to a certain circle of people who know him to be a member—and still more, that those who are more closely following the Master represent the Masters and Their service. Remember that you have the honour of the Society and of the Masters in your hands, and then you will realise that, though there should be no pretence, there yet should be great care as to how you carry yourselves, how you behave yourselves, what you do and what you say. Do not make naturalness the excuse for giving way to the "natural" man—for being below what your best nature would dictate. On the contrary, see that what is natural to you is the highest that you know.

The Occultist is never sanctimonious; you may very largely know him by that. If you find a person pretending to be an Occultist, giving himself out as such, and at the same time talking very largely about his own tolerance—to put it vulgarly, blowing his own

trumpet—putting on great pretence, wearing always a long face like the Pharisee of old, you may be sure that he is not a genuine Occultist. The genuine Occultist is above all things natural; yet he tries to get his nature a little higher than the average, and in that sense is not unnatural but "super-natural," in the plain and simple sense of "above the natural or ordinary". You know that it is said that people may quite easily fail to recognise a Master, because they have themselves made in their minds an ideal of what a Master must be, and the real living Master may not be like that at all. He does not adapt Himself to your prejudices and your ideas. He is that which He is on His own plane; and if you are hidebound by your own prejudices, even in regard to what a Master must be, your eyes will almost certainly be closed. We have had, I suppose, no more remarkable instance of that than Madame Blavatsky herself—H.P.B. as she loved to be called. She was certainly not the ideal that the world commonly forms of a great spiritual teacher—very far from it; and thus numbers of ordinary people, who were blinded by their own prejudices, lost the spiritual teaching which she alone could give them. Because she was so different from their ideals, they said, "This cannot be a person who has anything of value for us," and so they simply sheered off and left her alone. Thereby they lost the chance of the greatest revelation that has come to the world for many years. So remember that you must

not have your minds made up beforehand as to exactly what the Great World Teacher Himself will do, what He will say, and how He will carry Himself. It is for Him to settle all that, not for us. Do not run the risk of shutting yourself out from any real learning, from any advantage, by forming prejudices and preconceptions beforehand. It is well that we should be careful of this. I have seen so many people fail through misunderstanding Madame Blavatsky or our President, that I cannot but see that there is at least a possibility that there may be those (good and earnest people too) who will misunderstand even the great Lord of Love and Life when He shall come. Let us recognise Him to the full and be ready to follow Him, whether He does exactly what we expect Him to do, or whether in His wisdom He chooses to do something quite, quite different.

XI

February 23, 1915.

WE had just spoken, you remember, of the necessity of truth, both in speech and in action, of the naturalness of the Occultist, who never pretends to be other than he is, and you may remember, our last thought was that we should not make for ourselves too definite ideas of what the Great World Teacher will be like, or how He will act; otherwise, perhaps, prejudices of our own may prevent us from recognising Him when He comes. We should be ready to take Him exactly as He is.

The next sentence is:

> You must discriminate between the selfish and the unselfish. For selfishness has many forms, and when you think you have finally killed it in one of them, it arises in another as strongly as ever. But by degrees you will become so full of thought for the helping of others that there will be no room, no time, for any thought about yourself.

You know that is the only direct and perfect way of getting rid of selfishness. We all know that we ought to fight against it, but it is Hydra-headed. It appears in so many forms and our fight with it is like the fight of Hercules with the Hydra; when you lop

off one head another springs in place at once, and you may go on all your life long fighting against this insidious thing in one form or another, yet never fully succeed. But if you adopt the plan that is here suggested, if you become so full of thought for the helping of others that there is no time and no room for you to think about yourself at all, then you see, instead of making a great fight to try to get rid of selfishness, you get rid of it naturally, without trying, in the course of your development. I believe that to be the only perfect and certain way, because all other ways are so exceedingly difficult. If you think over a fault, you strengthen that fault. That is the mistake made in the Christian systems, when you are urged to repent of your faults and feel remorse for them. The more sorry you feel, and the more you turn the thing over in your mind, the stronger it grows. If you fight against it, it fights against you, because you are not dealing with a mere obstruction, you are dealing quite definitely with a desire elemental, and he very much wants those things which are, for you, bad habits. He does not want them because they are bad habits; in fact, he does not know anything about you. He wants them because he gets from them the sort of vibrations which he especially enjoys, which are good for his progress but not for yours. So you are fighting against a very definite force, and the more you fight, the more he will fight. But if, instead of fighting, you glance off,

as it were, in this way, you do not rouse this opposition, but you get the same result. Instead, therefore, of fighting against selfishness, develop unselfishness as a necessary consequence of the love in your heart for your fellow men. Desire always to be thinking of others, of helping and working for them; and then you will cut away the very roots of selfishness at once without the struggle. That is an artifice which is quite permissible to employ.

It seems to me to be the same all the way through. People take offence at things, they worry themselves about things, and they think of them over and over and over again; and the more they think of them the harder it becomes to throw off the obsession. People say, "I am badly treated by so and so, he does not care, he does not treat me as he should," and the more they think of that, the bigger the thought-form grows, and the more difficult it is to get rid of it. But if you simply drop the thing and go ahead and do some work for some one else, the thought-form is not intensified; it dies a natural death, drops away and is forgotten. In this connection you should remember what the Lord Buddha said. You may remember that, in His Noble Eightfold Path, the last step but one was "Right Remembrance, Right Memory". He said to His people: "You must be very careful what you allow yourselves to remember. If you say that you cannot help remembering everything, then you have

no control over your memory, over the mind which is a part of yourself. It is as though you went along the street gathering up all the rubbish that came your way; you are sweeping into your memory all kinds of useless and undesirable things. You should remember the right things and be particularly careful to forget the others. Then He tells them, amongst other things, elaborately and carefully, to forget all unkind words which may have been spoken to them, all fancied slights and injuries. These then are among the things which you should permanently and absolutely forget, whereas amongst the things you should remember are all the kind words that have ever been spoken to you, all the kindly deeds, all the good qualities you have seen in your neighbours. It is Right Memory to remember all these, but it is distinctly not right memory to remember a quantity of things which are useless. The Lord Buddha was the wisest of men, and many of these suggestions of His are eminently practical at the present day, just as they were 2,500 years ago, and so right memory is something you ought to exercise here. So long as you are saying something like what I said, so long as you are worrying about that, all the time you are thinking of self. You are not thinking of that other person; you are thinking of yourself, and his attitude towards you. That is precisely what you must not do if you seek for progress, for peace. If you are in earnest and mean business, you do not do these

things. It is the custom to brood over injuries and to make the most of them, but it is a very foolish thing to do; and furthermore, for us who profess to be Occultists, it is more foolish by far than it is for the ordinary man because we really do know better, if we stop to think about it. So, instead of thinking about yourself, go and do something for some one else at once, and in the interest of that, in the necessary focusing of your attention upon that, you will forget all about the alleged slights and so on. The mind cannot be filled with two things at once. If you cast out self and fill it with the thought of something that you are trying to do for other people, then the memory of the slights and injuries cannot possibly be there. Cast out self and fill it with love, that is the only way. Try to love all with whom you come into contact. I do not say all alike—that is not expected of you. The Lord Buddha Himself had His favourite disciple, Ananda, whom He loved more than the others, and Christ Himself had His beloved disciple, S. John. You are not expected to love people all alike, but you are expected to hold the attitude of love and not of hate. That you are expected to do. You should hold that attitude, without asking any return for it; because the moment you ask for any return, the moment you set up a claim, you are introducing the factor of desire again, and once more thinking of yourself and not of others. Forget yourself and think of

them, and pour out this love on all. Adopt the attitude of love towards all; then you will have peace. It is a hard lesson, to pour out love and not to expect any return; yet that is the finest kind of love. It is the only kind that deserves to be called love, because, with any other kind, you get entangled with jealousies, with all sorts of desires and envyings, and the love, instead of being pure glorious rose colour, becomes a sort of brownish-crimson, a poor looking thing, and, instead of making the splendid out-raying like sunlight, it makes hooks drawing it to yourself. (Look at the book, *Thought Forms*; you will find exactly the forms to which I refer.) Remember always that the selfish thought does nothing beyond yourselves—that it makes a closed curve. It brings something back to you, that is all it does; it does not move the universe. The worlds are moved by the Divine unselfish love, that pours out in great parabolic and hyperbolic curves and never returns, and does not mean to return. It is poured out to do its work in other dimensions and other planes, poured out to do the work of God in God's own way. If you can learn that lesson, it is well for you. But it is hard, because it means the destruction of the lower nature. Yet if you can learn that, then you will have peace. But not otherwise; that is the path to peace. Of course, people sometimes set themselves to work to overcome suffering by hardening themselves. I have known people do that. It is a favourite recipe in

India. A man says, "Yes, all emotion of any sort brings suffering with it, even the highest emotions. You pour out love; it is not returned; it brings you suffering." It is not love that brings you suffering, it is the selfishness, the desire mingled with it for return. It is not uncommon for philosophers in India to say you must avoid love, you must avoid anything whatever that will make a tie of any sort, because all such bindings mean suffering sooner or later. Such men escape the suffering by hardening themselves, by doing away with the possibility of affection in themselves. What they do not see, of course, is that, in doing that, they are destroying the capacity to help others, that by thus hardening themselves they do not become men of the highest type, but merely examples of arrested development, with the intellectual side, but with no emotional side; not men, but monsters strictly speaking. Therefore it is not the right way of development, it is a wrong way—a way which maims the Ego instead of developing him. It is exactly parallel, I think, with the other scheme of trying to avoid bad karma by trying never to do anything at all. That also is a very favourite scheme among certain people in India. They say action, on the whole, results far more in bad than in good karma, because we blunder. They therefore carefully refrain from doing anything at all, because in this way, at least, they avoid doing any harm. But

that method is not the Divine method at all. The Yoga of Action means skill in action, not inaction. Remember also, going back once more to the Lord Buddha, that He negatives the course referred to, most strongly, because one of the steps of the Noble Eight Fold Path is "Right Exertion," right energy. You are not to sit still and do nothing, and be content with being negatively good. You must do something valuable to human kind; for unless you are doing that you are not treading the Noble Eight Fold Path, which leads to Nirvana and to peace. So do not ever be misled by any so-called teaching, which tells you you must suppress all emotion, even such an emotion as love or devotion, because it may cause you suffering. It is true that because it may cause you suffering there is something that you should do with it. Clearly you have to purify it, and cast away the dross that causes the suffering, and not the pure gold of the love. So we must just take care that our love is the right kind of love, for then there will be no suffering, but on the contrary the very greatest joy—joy not only on the lower planes but on the highest, because love is of God, and God is love, and to develop that higher affection is to draw nearer to Him. Remember the whole subject is discrimination.

You must discriminate in yet another way. Learn to distinguish the God in everyone and everything, no matter how evil he or it may appear on the surface. You can

help your brother through that which you have in common with him, and that is the Divine life; learn how to arouse that in him, learn how to appeal to that in him; so shall you save your brother from wrong.

You are told to look for the good, the God, in everything. You know that there is nothing but God, that everything on this plane, as much as on any other plane, is a manifestation of the Divine life. There is nothing else; and therefore all of it—all of it, mind; you must make no exception, you must be logical—all of it, the good and the evil alike, must be an expression of God, because nothing can be of which God Himself is not the heart and the root. There is nothing but He. That fact is emphasised in all the Scriptures, but people find it very hard to understand. It shocks them dreadfully. You get it in the Christian Scriptures; "I [the Lord] make peace, and I create evil": You get it in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, where Shri Krishna says,

> I am the gambling of the cheat, and the splendour of the splendid things. I am determination, and the truth of the truthful I.

What did He mean by it? It shocks people dreadfully. They cannot understand that nothing can exist unless He permits it to exist—that all of it, spirit and matter alike, is part of Him. You have black Magicians, you have evil people of all sorts and kinds, but the life of these people is the Divine life, because there is no other life. You have to realise that. I know how hard it is to realise it; but you must face

the facts. If Shri Krishna says, " I am the gambling of the cheat," what does He mean by it? He means that man, the cheat, has something to learn by his cheating, and it is the only way, poor soul, in which he can learn it. If people will not learn by precept and example, then they must learn by the hard facts of the Laws of Nature. The Laws of Nature are only the most material expression of the Divine Mind, of the Divine Will, and they are like rocks. Man goes and bruises himself against them. If he will not learn in any other way, then he must learn that way. Of course that means suffering and it means evil. He induces evil by his stupidity, by his wrong-headedness, but all that is within the Divine Knowledge, all that is part of Him, absolutely part of Him; and evil though it be, yet out of it good is coming because it is the only way to evolve that particular man. Do you not see that that man, the cheat, will cheat, he has it in his mind to do that? The mind, although he is misusing it, is yet part of the Divine Mind. The man is under the Divine Law still; and, although he is doing wrong, yet, out of the wrong which he does, for him good will come, because he will learn by that and by failure he will learn to step into the right path. It is, as it were, a last resort; but it is a resort, and therefore we must acknowledge it to be within the Divine Plan. That man has had, as I said, both precept and example. If he had chosen to take that, he would have avoided all this evil and

suffering. He would not take it, and he must evolve. Therefore, if there is no other way in which he will accept the thing, no other way in which he can evolve, then under the Divine Laws he learns by the evil that he does and the suffering that follows upon that evil. So you see there is a sense in which everything absolutely is God. Still, it is not exactly in that sense that these words are written; it is that in every man is the Divine spark which makes him man; he could not be there, he could not be a man, if that were not present. If you can get at that, if you can get behind the personality which is so warped, which has gone so far wrong, if you can get to the Divine life in man, you can appeal to that. It is the thing which you have in common with him. Remember that the "evil" man, as a soul, wishes to make progress just as you do. He wishes to get rid of the evil which is haunting and obsessing and troubling his personality; and therefore, if you can only get back to that soul through all this outer crust of hardness and evil, that soul will rush up and help you in your endeavours to help the personality. I have been a priest and a lay-helper. I worked in some of the very worst parts in England. I worked in the parish of St. Albans, Holborn, there is no fouler district in London than that. I have seen very many men whom you would think hopeless criminals; I have never seen one yet that had not some spark of good in him somewhere.

It might be his love for a child, his love for a dog, which seemed to be the only human touch in what was otherwise a brute, and a dangerous brute. But there was, and is, the one touch somewhere, and, if you can get him on that, there is just the chance you may be able to help him by an appeal to that one thing, and so to do something for him. So however evil the outside may be, remember, first of all, that the very evil itself is a part of the Divine, however strange that may seem to you. It cannot be otherwise, the logic is merciless. Remember, too, that in every man and in everything is the Divine life that is in you, and if you can touch that Divine life, that common chord, which is in both of you alike, through that you can help the other man. That is the only way in which you can do it. Your business is to look for the divine in everybody and everything, and when you have found the Divine spark, the manifestation of the Divine life, the rest of it does not concern you. Find that Divine spark; it is with this that you have to deal; the rest (it is evil no doubt) is the man's business, not yours. Realise that Divine spark, that One Life, and rouse it in your brothers. The Master concludes, "So shall you save your brother from wrong." That is the strongest of all motives for the Occultist. You know that the disciple exists to be a saviour, a saviour of the world, and the more we can reflect that idea in our lives, that of living only to help, and to save

others so far as we can, the more shall we reflect in our lives the beauty of the Master's life. That is the end of the chapter, or section, which treats the first of the virtues:

DISCRIMINATION

II

DESIRELESSNESS

WE now come to the second qualification, that is to say, *Vairagya*, which the Master here has translated " Desirelessness ". It has been translated " Indifference," but that is not good because in English we have several meanings for that word " Indifference," and most of them are quite inappropriate. It is not that a man cares nothing, but that he will not allow desire to dominate him. The Master's translation " Desirelessness " is really a far better one; in fact, it is an absolutely literal rendering of the Samskrit word *Vairagya*, the absolute absence of desire. Mrs. Besant rather plumed herself on her translation, " Dispassion ". But, the moment she saw the Master's word " Desirelessness," she said, " Ah yes, that is nearer, that is better." So since then she has always used it. He begins by saying:

> There are many for whom the Qualification of Desirelessness is a difficult one, for they feel that they *are* their desires—that if their distinctive desires, their likings and dislikings, are taken away from them, there will be no self left.

We, I hope, are in the habit of distinguishing between our desires and ourselves, but I suppose you

cannot help knowing that very large numbers of people in the world do not make this distinction. They make no effort to distinguish. They say; "I am as God has made me. If I am not strong enough to resist temptation, this is how I was made." They do not realise that they made themselves by their past lives, but are in the habit of taking the character of which they are possessed as a sort of inalienable something which is given to them, like a lame leg. If you have one leg shorter than another, well, there is nothing to be done about it. So they say if they have a bad temper or a weak will, "There I am; that is how I was made." They do not realise that they can take hold of that and change it. So, if they find themselves full of desires for the grosser things they say, "That is how I am made; it is my nature." They do not see that it is their business to change a nature which is undesirable. They do not know that they can, and furthermore they do not see particularly why they should. It is only the higher knowledge that Theosophy gives us that makes a really sufficient incentive to any serious change of character. It is no light matter for a man to change his character, for this is the very fundamental basis of him. And perhaps there is no adequate reason to be held out to the average man, why he should take all this trouble. "After all you cannot say very much about it; a man has the right to choose for himself. The inducements

generally held out to the man are unquestionably insufficient. The only one that I ever heard of that seems to me adequate is the Theosophical theory. If you understand God's plan, if because God is love, you learn to love God and to seek to co-operate with Him, then you have the most tremendous of all possible motives for making yourself fit to co-operate in this great work of evolution. There is a real motive, and it is worth your while. You know that this life is not the only one, but that you have all the lives you need, and that therefore you can change yourself. You can make the most fundamental changes in your character and disposition. Thus there is some hope, and therefore some reason why you should take all this trouble; otherwise, frankly, I rather sympathise with the ordinary man. People do not give him a sufficient reason; so the ordinary man does feel that he is his desires. He says, "I think," "I want," "I like this," "I hate that," whereas it is not he who desires or hates, but simply the desire elemental in him, with which he identifies himself. We have learnt that that is not so. We no longer, I hope, identify ourselves with him in that way, but we know that there are a good many subtle ways in which this desire elemental works. I am not at all sure that we might not sometimes, even now, fall a victim to him. I should suggest one way of testing it at any rate: so long as an ungratified desire can cause you unhappiness you

are still identifying yourself with your desires. We all desire various things which as a rule we do not get. Does it cause us unhappiness? If it does, then we are identifying ourselves with our desires. If we do not identify ourselves with the desires, then whether the thing we wish comes to us or not, in any case we are equal to either fortune. We, as souls, rise above desires and their gratification, or non-gratification. Here too, just as we spoke about changing moods, so you find changing desires; but the Self does not change, and you, the Ego, you the soul, you certainly have, whatever you know of it down here, only the one great burning, overmastering desire for progress and for the unfoldment of the higher self, and the bringing of the lower vehicles into tune as its instruments. That is the constant never-changing desire of the Ego. Whenever you find other desires which are not part of that, and do not agree with it, then you know those are not the Soul, and so you do not say, "I desire this" you say, "My desire elemental is working again, he wants so and so; I, the Ego, wish to progress, I wish to co-operate in the Divine plan. These changing moods, these changing desires are not mine." In that way you may recognise the thing for what it is. The Master goes on:

> But these are only they who have not seen the Master; in the light of His holy Presence all desire dies, but the desire to be like Him.

That is one of the especially beautiful sentences in this very remarkable book, that in the Light of His holy Presence all desire dies, but the desire to be like Him. You have the same thing, I remember, in one of the Indian Scriptures, where it says (I do not remember the exact words) "The objects of the senses turn away from the man who leads an ascetic life, but even the very desire for them falls away when the Supreme is seen." So here, when once we have seen the Master, when once we have realised Him, all lower desires are simply not there any more. You are then thinking of something higher, you have gone out of all that; you have seen something so infinitely greater than that, that these lower desires simply cannot exist any longer.

Yet before you have the happiness of meeting Him face to face, you may attain desirelessness if youwil. !

These three words are important—" If you will "—if you really mean to do it. You know plenty of people speak of their wish to attain desirelessness, and yet all the time they are hugging the objects of desire and would be unhappy without them, so that they do not in reality wish for this desirelessness at all; they only think they do. On the surface they do, but deep down inside they know that they cannot free themselves. It is better perhaps to try to face a thing like that and make sure of it, and see whether we have got rid of all these lower desires. The Theosophist often thinks that he has; he even thinks it to

be a sort of elementary thing. Yes, but a great many of these elementary things go very deep. Superficially you get rid of them, but they crop up again in different forms. It is very hard to be sure that you are really rid of them. Fortunately it is not expected of us that we shall be utterly rid of them at this stage. You may attain Initiation with the seeds or rather the roots of some of these things still within you. But after Initiation you must cut yourself clear; you must be absolutely free from the various fetters. Therefore it would be well to try to root them out utterly now, so that your progress afterwards may be smoother and more rapid. But nothing impossible is ever asked of us; the Master never suggests to you anything that you cannot do. He does suggest many things which will tax your endurance or moral strength, because that has to be done if you want to get on; you *must* put out this strength. But He never tells you to do something that you cannot do—you may be sure of that; so that if you will you may attain desirelessness.

Discrimination has already shown you that the things which most men desire, such as wealth and power, are not worth having; when this is really felt, not merely said, all desire for them ceases.

Yes, as soon as you are quite sure that they are not worth having. But are you quite sure? You know that all these things have two or three sides to them. Wealth stands for and includes all objects, of

whatever kind, which foster desire, and the increase of possessions does not necessarily increase happiness. So that even though you are not desiring wealth you may be desiring objects—power, social power or political power. Very few people ever attain those, you know; it requires certain definite qualities which most of us probably have not, so that it is not by any means only that, but power includes all wish to control other people, the wish to interfere with them and to tell them what to do instead of minding your own business. Now, though there may not be much desire for social and political power (I should hope there is none, particularly among us) there still is very frequently a terrible itch, a very strong and earnest desire, to make people do what you think they ought to do. Well, I suppose that is but natural; but, natural or not, that must go if you mean business. If you desire to make progress, that desire to interfere with other people must go. You must learn to leave them to manage their own affairs. We must all of us realise that we have quite enough to do to manage our own lower selves, without trying to interfere with anybody else; and, furthermore, we have no right to interfere. You must remember that the self in others is the same as the self in you, and that the way in which its manifestation takes place in those others is their business, not ours; so that we must learn this great virtue of minding our own business, and not seeking to interfere. Of course I know perfectly

well that you who are Theosophists would want to interfere only because you know better, because you think that you can manage their affairs better than they can manage them. You know, or you think you know, that you could do something much better than they are able to do, but you do not realise that, after all, each man knows his own dangers, his own requirements, and that the divine power is working through him, so that you had better let it work in its own way. Sometimes you can very tactfully, very respectfully, very delicately, offer advice. There are many cases where even that would be impertinence. Never under any circumstances attempt to force your opinion on others. Never burn to manage their affairs. Take care, first of all, that your own are well managed; for each man is responsible to himself; to his own Master he stands or falls, not to us. Therefore above all things let us learn to mind our own business. It is a most valuable maxim very little understood.

He says:

> Thus far all is simple; it needs only that you should understand.

Of course, we do not all find it as simple as the Master thinks it. It ought to be simple. Getting rid of the desire for all earthly things ought to be quite simple. It is the plainest common-sense, when we know as much as every one of you does know of the higher things. Under the circumstances there

should certainly remain no desire for the lower. It is quite as ridiculous as it would be for a big boy still to cling to the dolls and bricks of his tiny childhood; but still there is a very strong illusion all round us. Public opinion, you know, is a very tremendous force, and the fact that, all round us, there are thousands of people all following these objects of desire makes it very difficult to keep the fact clear before us, that these things are really of no importance. The constant pressure of the opinion that they are the only things worth living for makes it quite difficult for us to hold on to the truth, even though we know it. Even though every one of us would subscribe to it quite heartily, yet in practice we are swayed more or less by the weight of common thought around us. When you recognise that and are on your guard against it, you have a better chance of fighting it. That pressure is absolutely insistent, there is not the slightest change in it; it goes on always, night and day, this pressure of public opinion, and though we should not yield to it for a moment, if we recognised it, we are most of us unconsciously swayed by it. Therefore, in spite of our knowledge, it is not quite so simple as it ought to be to put aside the worldly point of view. It can be done, but it is not so easy, because we are very few as yet who take that line, and there are very many who take the other. He says:

"It needs only that you should understand," and then:

> But there are some who forsake the pursuit of earthly aims only in order to gain heaven, or to attain personal liberation from rebirth; into this error you must not fall.

Of course the obtaining of personal liberation from rebirth is an idea which we find chiefly in India. You have to remember, all through, that these instructions were given to an Indian boy, and that therefore, first of all and most of all, they refer to Indian conditions, as seen in many of the remarks about superstition, caste, etc., though, other things being equal, they apply to our conditions as well. We are not particularly likely, I hope, to make violent efforts for the sake of gaining heaven. We know too much about it. Many of us would prefer, if possible, to avoid the heaven world altogether and to continue to work upon the earth; and that is possible for those who really desire it. People often ask us about that; they say, "Is it possible to continue to work for the Master and to avoid heaven, which seems almost a waste of time?" Certainly, it is possible if you wish it and are strong enough for it. For it does need a certain amount of strength. Remember that, if you want to take what is commonly called a rapid incarnation, you must carry on the same mental and astral bodies. You get a new physical body, but the astral and mental bodies are the same. So that the question of fatigue arises.

The physical body becomes worn out; the astral body and the mental do not, so far as we know, show anything similar to fatigue. It is not your mind but your physical brain which is tired—the mind itself is not—so it is not that, but there is another consideration. The astral and the mental bodies which you have in this life are the expression of you generally as you were at the end of your last life. The astral and mental bodies which you first form for yourself are just exactly that. As you go through your present life, you modify them considerably, but at the same time you cannot modify a thing beyond a certain point. I suppose any tailor would tell you there comes a stage where, instead of patching or altering a badly cut coat, it would be better to start a fresh one; and you can see how that might be with the astral and mental body too. A radical change would take a very great deal of time and might perhaps be only partially arrived at after all: for there are limits. If your deserts have gone far in front of your capacities—the capacities being, remember, the results of the deserts of your last life, it might be better for your progress that you should get a new astral and mental body, instead of trying to patch up and alter the old ones. So it is not always a practical thing. But at any rate, I think we might take it that, as things are now, with the special need of workers in view of the coming of the World Teacher, any person who has worked well in

this life, and is earnestly desirous of taking an immediate incarnation in order to continue that work, may be able to achieve his desire. Many people have already expressed their wish that they may be able to do that. Remember that for any variation from the ordinary course of things special permission is required. A man has to make what amounts to an application, or it has to be made for him. It has to be submitted to a higher Authority, who can give permission, if He thinks it desirable, but who also would quite certainly refuse it if He did not think it to be in the best interest of the person in question. But I think those who have anxiety on that subject may set their minds at rest: those who have worked well now will have every opportunity of going on with their work. One has to make oneself indispensable. That also incidentally is the best way to bring your astral and mental bodies into the condition you require; so service is the panacea for all difficulties. Those of us who are doing this, therefore, are not particularly likely to be working for the sake of attaining heaven, I imagine. You see what is said here:

> If you have forgotten self altogether, you cannot be thinking when that self should be set free, or what kind of heaven it shall have. Remember that all selfish desire binds, however high may be its object, and until you have got rid of it you are not wholly free to devote yourself to the work of the Master.

That shows you that the desire for heaven is a personal thing belonging to the personality. Remember

that it is not by any means a bad thing at an earlier stage. It has its place in the evolutionary scheme. You know well enough that the primitive man is full of thought about eating and drinking, etc. It would be quite useless to talk to a man like that about Desirelessness. He could not rise to it. He must pass through a stage of higher and more refined desires, before he can rise to desirelessness. It is no good saying to a man of that kind: "Kill out desire." It would be wiser to say: "Try to refine your desires. There are other and grander things than these which you are feeling, and you cannot rise to those in future unless you are prepared to check the outrush of your feelings." To substitute the higher for the lower is a reason for restraint—that is about all you can do. There is a quotation in one of the Upanishads which runs something like this: "Until the bonds of the heart are broken man cannot obtain immortality." That sounds a hard thing to say—"The bonds of the heart"—for that includes the thing to which we attach the very highest importance. But remember it says, "The *bonds* of the heart." Love itself is a bond of the heart, if there is a grain of selfishness in it; when it is utterly free from any thought of selfishness, it is a *power* of the heart, but until the bonds are broken, until the selfishness is weeded out, yes, love itself may be a hindrance as well as help. Of course the love of the Self in one man for the Divine Self in another is everlasting. You cannot

change that if you would. But if you bring anything of the lower into it, then the thing becomes a tie, and a tie that you will have to break by weeding the selfishness out of it—that is, if you really mean business, if you are really in earnest. Of course we take it that you, who are students of Occultism, are in earnest; but perhaps even among you there may be those who have not realised all that 'being utterly in earnest' means. It means that for you there is only one thing—and that is the work, that everything else absolutely has to be put aside for that, and that nothing whatsoever must be allowed to get in your way. As I said to you the other day, we get in our own way. We have to get out of it, and to give the Self in us a chance of working; for as long as we have reservations, as long as we have something which we are not prepared to give up for the sake of the Master's service, we are standing in our own way. It is a rare thing to find any one who has no reservations whatever, who will give himself utterly to the service of the Master, who will stick at nothing, but will absolutely give all. It is rare; but the man who has that quality will go very far and very fast. These things have been told you in other Scriptures too. You remember in the *Bhagavad-Gita* it is always insisted that you must not work for fruit. Now here is the same thing in another form:

When all desires for self are gone, there may still be a desire to see the result of your work. If you help anybody,

you want to *see* how much you have helped him: perhaps even you want him to see it too, and to be grateful. But this is still desire, and also want of trust.

You see, if you are really working, and working earnestly, you have no time to trouble yourself about the results. When you have finished one thing, you do not stand gazing to see what has come from your efforts. Supposing you were acting as a nurse or a helper on the battle field, or one of the helpers connected with it, you would have to do the best you could for one case and instantly turn to another. You could not stop to watch for half an hour to see what exactly was going to be the final effect of your ministrations. You could not even stop to see whether the man was likely to recover or not.

It is just the same with the Master's work. You have not time to stop and think about the ultimate results; and, above all, you have no time to think about yourself in connection with those ultimate results. As you see, the Master speaks of your sometimes wanting the man you have helped to see it, too, and to be grateful. Now, if you have any feeling of that sort you are not giving at all, you are selling your help—so much help for so much gratitude. It is a species of barter. You are not actually giving with a free hand at all; and the only giving which is recognised in Occultism is to give as God gives, to pour out love as the sun pours out light—that is the only kind of thing we call giving in the

occult world. So remember, do not sell your help, with the expectation of getting something for it, but give it freely, and then let come what will.

I have no doubt some people would think that that would mean absolute carelessness about results. It is not exactly that—it is not so much indifference to the result as literally having no time to think about it. You are not thinking about yourself, you are thinking about the cases with which you are dealing. To attain that, of course, is a kind of counsel of perfection. It is very difficult. We say, " Well, I cannot reach that point: I hope I may some day." Many of us think that. Now that is absolutely the wrong way to go to work. If you think you cannot, then you cannot. Do not you see that all those thoughts make thought-forms? If you think, " All this is too hard; I cannot do this yet," every such thought is actually what in the mediæval times they would have called, " a little tempting devil ". You make a little thought-form " It is too hard, I cannot do it," and these thought-forms surround you, and they play upon you whenever you are not thinking strongly of anything else. So that, when you happen to be a little depressed, a little below par, promptly comes in that thought-form and says, " I cannot do that, I shall not be able to succeed." Now, just as you can make a number of these tempting little demons that will come and worry you, so you can if you like make a great big strong guardian thought-form by saying,

"I can do it and I will do it." If you do, then that thought-form will also hover round you and will come into your mind whenever there is nothing else there, always stirring you up to effort: "I can and I will."

That obviously is the way to utilise these methods of nature. As in all other cases, when you know the laws of nature, you can use them. If you understand these thought-forms, you may just as well make the thought-form that will be a constant use to you as well as one that will be a constant hindrance. It is no more trouble to make one than the other. It all depends upon your attitude of mind. You will think, "My attitude of mind only matters to me just now." It will matter to you the next day, or the next month, or the next year, because it generates thought-forms that react upon you. So every thought intensifies itself, repeats itself in this sort of way. That is precisely what you should do in the matter. You should make for yourself a thought-form that will help you a thing which is quite easy to do. He says:

> When you pour out your strength to help, there must be a result, whether you can see it or not; if you know the Law, you know that this must be so.

Yes, there must be a result, but very often it is unseen. You know that very often it takes the work of a number of people following one another to achieve some great result. When there is a great reform to be introduced into the world, you will find that

it is comparatively rarely that one man preaches the beginning of that reform and sees it clear through to the end. Much more often one man, or group of men, will see this thing and begin to talk about it, but he, or they, will probably be ridiculed, scoffed at, no attention will be paid to them, and it will seem that their work has been absolutely without result. But at least they will convert some people. These people will carry the thing on. Presently you will arrive at a point where Society will accept the reform for which they have been working. The work of those first pioneers seemed to be absolutely fruitless; but of course it was not. What was done by their successors could never have been done but for the apparently unsuccessful work of these first pioneers. It is like building a big house. First of all deep strong foundations must be laid. Yet these foundations do not show. Presently some one else comes along and puts a layer of bricks above ground. His work is seen, but the house could not have existed without those strong foundations. When it is a finished building the foundations are an integral part of the whole structure. Just so it may often be the nature of our work to bring something nearer to its accomplishment; and then some one else will step in and put the final touches. His work will be recognised, and probably he will be considered to have done the whole thing. But we must not mind that: we know quite well, within ourselves, that the earlier work

was necessary; otherwise the later could not have burst out into flower, as it did. Never mind, we care nothing about getting the credit, nothing whatever about seeing the result. All that matters for us is that we should be allowed to do the work. You must not think, "That is rather hard on me," when you find somebody else stepping in and getting the credit. It does not matter. You must not have the faintest feeling of jealousy about him; you must not think for a moment, "That is rather hard on me". What you have done, your karma will take account of, and it does not matter whether the world recognises it or not.

In any case, it is quite certain that the result will follow upon what you do. Therefore, if you work scientifically, understandingly, you will never be disappointed. Disappointments mean that there has always been a thought of the fruit of action, that you have been thinking of the result. It did not turn out as you expected, and so you are disappointed. All disappointment comes from thought of self. Have no such thought and you will have no disappointment.

Remember, when the Lord comes, He will take up all our work and carry it on to its result and completion; and so it will appear that it is all His work, and indeed, it all is; yet a great deal of it will have been made possible by the unseen, the apparently profitless work of a number of people beforehand, and that we should have a chance of being amongst those people

is assuredly the very greatest privilege for us—a thing which we should most of all desire. So, very often you will find that, without those who toiled and saw no result, the work which finally turns out so gloriously could not have been done at all.

> So you must do right for the sake of the right, not in the hope of reward; you must work for the sake of the work, not in the hope of seeing the result; you must give yourself to the service of the world because you love it, and cannot help giving yourself to it.

That is, indeed, that greatest of all motives, love, once more. You will see how persistently that recurs all through the teaching of this book, and of other later books which have been moulded to a large extent upon it, such as those of Mr. Jinarajadasa, "In His Name," "What We Shall Teach". You will see how strong, and how constantly repeated is this need of love as the motive. Love is the explanation of everything, the remedy of all ills. Remember this is all a foreshadowing of what the Great World Teacher Himself will say, when He comes. It is because that will be the keynote of His teaching that it is already so strongly foreshadowing the teaching of those who are trying in their small way to prepare the way for Him.

Another thing you will note all through this book and those others is the taking for granted that the work is the only thing. All through, the Master takes it for granted that you are utterly in earnest,

that the work is the one thing for you. The very fact that the Masters do take it for granted is the best way of bringing you into that frame of mind, if you have still some lingering fragments of the older ideas still hanging about you. The fact that it is so evident that the Master expects this, that it is so clearly in His mind that there is no thought of anything but service, no touch of the personal left—all this is the greatest of incentives for us to make ourselves like that, to put ourselves in the same position. Then He touches upon another point which many people desire:

> Have no desire for psychic powers.

I have sometimes thought that that expression "psychic powers" is in some ways rather an unfortunate one. It has come to be used in a certain sense in our literature, so that we can hardly hope to change it now. "Psychic powers" means powers of the soul. *Psyche*, in Greek, is "soul" you know; but all our powers are powers of the soul. The President once defined that: she said, "Such a word should include all manifestations of consciousness through organised matter, whether that matter be physical, or astral, or mental." She gave as an example "Why, all the powers of our intellect are psychic powers"; certainly they are. People sometimes speak against psychic powers, and say that in many ways they are dangerous. To be logical they

ought to speak against all use of the senses. In India, for instance, there are cases where people deliberately destroy the outer senses, (blind themselves, for example,) because they say the outer senses, whether physical or astral senses, only serve to bring you more closely into touch with the matter from which they are trying to escape. Now at least that is a logical point of view to take. I do not agree with it in the least. I say most distinctly that people should be healthy on all planes and should use all the senses they possess on those planes, and not cast them aside to be atrophied. But people who object to the use of clairvoyance and say it is better not to have anything to do with it ought also to reject the evidence of the physical senses if they wish to be logical. They say, and remember that is quite true, that the astral senses very often deceive people. In the beginning, those who are unused to them are often misled, but they forget that exactly the same thing is true on the physical plane. That is what they do not seem to realise. They say: "Anything that you get by your astral senses may be all wrong. Anything that you get by your physical senses must be quite accurate." In a whole host of ways your reason is all the time helping to correct the impressions of your senses. Why, every morning, if you are up in time, you see the sun rise. You know perfectly well it does not really rise, and yet you see it doing it. It is not rising; you know that it is resting, or moving, in

space; but anyhow it is not rising. You as a parasite on the surface of the earth are being moved round in the opposite direction. Your senses are by no means to be relied on. You must check them by reason. You can try for yourself a simple experiment that will show you the truth of this in a moment. People say, "Seeing is believing," some go further and say, "If I can touch the thing." Take three bowls of water, and put in them water of different temperatures, one so hot that you can only just bear your hand in it; make the other icy cold, and in the middle one put water of temperate degree. Put your two hands, one into the hot, and the other into the very cold. Let them remain there for a few minutes, then move them both into the central bowl. The hand that has been in the hot water will tell you that this central bowl of water is very cold: the other hand will tell you that it is very hot. That shows you that your senses are not always to be implicitly relied on. You have to check the use of your senses by your reason and you have to do that just as much with your astral or mental senses as you have to do it with your physical senses.

But it is quite true that the beginner is liable to a great many deceptions: so is the baby who is beginning to use physical senses. You have, probably many of you, seen a baby reach out to take hold of some bright object, a candle at the other end of the room, or the moon in the sky. It knows nothing at

all about distance: it sees a thing and it gropes towards it. The baby's delusion does not matter, because it is in the midst of its elders. They correct it. They carry it to the light and it learns the question of distance. So by slow degrees it gets out of its delusion. The delusion of the astral baby would not matter if he were always surrounded by his elders in that sort of knowledge and was as willing to be taught by them as the baby is by the grown-up people. But the trouble is that one who is really an astral baby generally imagines that he is a very great person indeed, that he has been chosen from all the rest of the world to receive this mighty revelation. Therefore he does not want to learn anything. That is one of the difficulties with which we are constantly faced.

Those who become pupils of our Masters are put through a long course of training with regard to this use of higher sight and higher impressions generally. I suppose that to most of you that training would be very wearisome. An elder pupil will take you and pass before you a number of different objects, and say "What do you see?" You describe what you think you see, but you are generally quite wrong at first, because you have got the thing out of focus. For example, you do not know the difference between the astral body of a dead man and of a living man. You do not know the difference between the man himself and the thought-form of him made by some

friend. In hosts of ways you are liable to all kinds of deceptions. Patiently the teacher (some older pupil appointed to look after you) will show you these things again and again, and show you how to recognise them, point out the minute differences. You have to work at it, and it is often a matter of years before you will be perfectly certain in all cases. You probably do not realise the extent of the area over which this clairvoyant vision extends. To take one example only—on the astral plane alone there are 2,401 different varieties of what is called "elemental essence" and if you wish to be reliable and to do your best, you must learn all of these. You must learn to distinguish one from the other, and how and when you are to use them, if you are to make thought-forms economically. You can do it without any of this knowledge, but if so, you do it very wastefully, on the principle of emptying a bucket of water over a man to wash his little finger—about that proportion of exertion to result.

If you want to know how to do the work of the higher planes you must go through an apprenticeship, and you must learn patiently bit by bit. If you merely plunge into the thing, you are throwing buckets of water most of the time. You are wasting a vast amount of energy. That is one of the things you must avoid. We ought always to avoid wasting energy. Your energy is your capital; you are bound to make the most of it. You are responsible for any

waste of it, just as you would be responsible if you let it lie idle and did nothing with it. And to do this, you must learn. It would be of no use for a pupil of the Master to say, "I know already." That is not the spirit in which we approach these things. We who are pupils are always eager and anxious to acquire further information, but always that we may serve the better, in order that we may be more useful. That is the idea, and most assuredly there is no knowledge that comes amiss in the work which we have to do. I have often been struck with that: scientific knowledge, technical knowledge, knowledge of chemistry, of engineering—every one of them is useful to the Occultist. It enables him to illustrate points and very often to understand points which otherwise might not be clear to him. We are told that, at the end of it all, we shall attain all knowledge: we shall get rid of *Avidya*, or ignorance. I can quite see that that is a goal which will be practically a necessity. I can see that all our work is tending in that direction: that we shall need to be most wonderfully well informed in that sort of way. And so, you see, to say you have no desire for psychic powers,—in one sense that indeed might be said to be the wisest of advice. Have no desire for them, but wait until the Master sees fit that you should have them. The book itself says:

> They will come when the Master knows that it is best for you to have them. To force them too soon often brings

in its train much trouble; often their possessor is misled by deceitful nature-spirits, or becomes conceited and thinks he cannot make a mistake.

The deceitful nature-spirits are a very real feature in the case, you know. There are very many different kinds of these. Mostly they are rather small creatures, and they think it is very amusing if they can make a great big man do what they say, and order him about. They can do that very often merely by pretending to be Julius Cæsar, Napoleon, or anybody that happens to occur to them, and it is great fun to see big people, who belong to a higher stage of evolution than their own, doing what they suggest. It is perhaps a little hard on the poor people; the only thing is that they should have brought their reason and common-sense to bear upon things. If you hear an astral voice sometimes, do not immediately jump to the conclusion that it is the voice of a Master. Do not think that it is necessarily a great Archangel—they are very few and their contact with humanity is not very frequent—whereas dead people are always speaking, always offering advice in one way or another, and nature-spirits play their little tricks frequently. The voice is more likely to be that of a dead man than that of any Great Teacher, Master or Archangel. So, as I say, if you happen to hear an astral voice, take it quite calmly. It is a very interesting phenomenon, not because of anything you

might get out of it, but because anything a little out of the ordinary way is in itself interesting, and there is generally something to be learned from it. So note well everything that it says, but use your reason with regard to it. Do not, of course, take the opposite course and start by denying that there is a revelation. That again is a dangerous thing to do; one should never hastily deny. I have had many years of this sort of work, and I have assuredly learnt that—not to be in haste to deny anything. One may think of a thing as very improbable; it is not safe to say that it is impossible. So much happens, and there are so many and such varied possibilities, that it is never safe to deny outright. Use always your reason and common-sense; listen respectfully to the revelation whatever it may be, but do not let it affect your conduct in any way. Your conduct should be the result of your own decision—of your own reasoned thought, and not of something that somebody else, you do not know who, tells you. By all means receive the advice; it is most likely kindly meant, but do not follow it unless it seems reasonable; for reason and common-sense are the highest things you have. They are given you to check all these other impressions. Do not forget to use them, merely because the impression comes to you from the astral plane instead of the physical plane. For that is all the more reason why you should use them.

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XIII

March 9, 1915.

We were speaking last week of psychic powers, and saying that it was always wise to use common-sense with regard to the various revelations which are made by their means. That is a point which is worth while emphasising just now, because this is a time when you are likely to meet with many things of that sort. Of course there are always psychic revelations being poured out; I do not know so much of their frequency in this country, but I know that at any rate in America such things are constantly coming before the public in one way or another. A vast number of people have revelations which they think are going to affect the world greatly. Usually there is nothing very striking about them, but they are often quite good of their kind, though generally, perhaps, a little indefinite and perhaps vague in outline and not very clear in their teaching. They are nearly always more or less along Theosophical lines, or along New Thought lines. They might be described as Theosophy and water—the amount of water generally very much exceeding the amount of Theosophy—but, as far as they go, an improvement

upon the very limited and cramped theories of orthodoxy. They always tend to widen out, they are almost always given by some dead man of perfectly good intention, who has now realised certain broad facts of life which he wishes to impress upon those he has left behind. He thinks that the world would be a very much better place if these higher ideas were accepted, and he tries to impress them on all people on the general theory of Dives in the parable, that if some one came to the people from the dead they would repent; forgetting, of course, the sage answer of Abraham: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Such a man forgets that he himself paid no attention to such revelations, when he was alive. If such come in your way—they are sure to more or less—you should receive them quite respectfully, but at the same time without any undue excitement. Great numbers of these revelations come to me and to our President also. People have all sorts of psychic experiences and messages, and they send them to us usually with the idea that they are of the very deepest importance and that they are going to revolutionise the planet. The planet takes a great deal of revolutionising, and we take it, as a rule, very quietly, having, of course, if it is necessary to apply to them, certain means of testing the truth and validity of these communications. Most of you, perhaps, would not have those

means immediately at your disposal, but if you will just apply plain common-sense you will get along very well with most of them.

There are two attitudes which are most commonly adopted by outside people; either they receive these communications blindly, or they scoff and say that the whole thing is ridiculous. Both these extremes are simply silly. Every one who has studied these things knows that they do come, but that they very often come from people who know no more than we do. Just because a man is dead, he is not entitled to very much more authority and deference than when he was alive. He may, as a dead man, if he is wise enough to do it, learn certain things which as a living man he could not learn, but it is to be remembered that about ninty-nine per cent of the dead never do learn these things, but go on contentedly with many of the limitations and prejudices which they had on earth.

One takes these things very calmly and philosophically, but one is careful never to deny or to scoff. Now you will have more and more of such things just now. Abnormal and unusual things of various kinds are likely to be happening just now, because the time of the Coming of the World Teacher is drawing near, and you must remember that that fact is very widely known on other planes. On the physical plane there is a very strong expectation of His Coming. Quite outside the Theosophical ranks there

are very many sets of people, many religious sects, which feel the nearness of His Coming and are thereby raised to a higher level of vibration, and consequently they are likely to be recipients of such communications. They invite them by their attitude of expectancy. Therefore you may be quite sure that there will be a great deal of such information with regard to the Coming of the Lord. You remember how He said Himself, a long time ago, that there would be many false Christs who would come. I suppose, when the average reader comes across that passage, he thinks of the false Christs as Anti-Christs, as people setting themselves against the true teaching and obtruding themselves into the place of the Christ. I should venture to suggest that most of the false Christs will be nothing of the kind. Most of them will be entirely well-meaning people who have really persuaded themselves that they are overshadowed by the Christ, and the very fact that they are well-meaning and earnest would make them in one way more dangerous, because other people will feel that they are well-meaning and earnest, and be carried away by that. We, I hope, would not be so carried away, because we are expecting the Coming with a clearness and a definiteness which most of the sects have not ; so I think that we shall not be deceived thereby. But remember that many of these false Christs, although they may be wrong in claiming the Christhood, may be people

of good and noble lives, and their teachings may be very good teachings. Just the same with many of these religious sects around us now; many of them are narrow and bigoted, but there are splendidly good men among them, and their preachers are preaching morality and brotherliness and kindliness, and therefore they are all doing good in their own way.

I think our Theosophical attitude about false Christs will be: It will be a pity, perhaps, if people are misled into identifying some ordinary teacher with the World Teacher. Nevertheless, if his teachings are good, and the people follow them heartily and nobly, their lives will be benefited. The fact that they have wrong impressions on certain points will not prevent their acquiring the karma of their good lives. It is of course a pity; it would have been better that they should have seen the truth clearly, but we should not take the mistaken view that people who do not see the truth clearly are necessarily wrong in every other respect as well, because they are not.

As to the followers of the false Christs, I dare say there will be plenty of them. I have already heard of several. I do not concern myself much about them. I find that they gather each a few followers, and then somehow the cult dies out, so that I do not think we need be disturbed. Above all, we should not allow ourselves to have any

feeling of dislike. We should not get excited over all these things. It is not unnatural, of course, that those who are enthusiastic should feel that way. We, who are so sure that we are on the right track ourselves, know already so much of the glory and the beauty of Him Who is to come, that to hear some one else setting up to be the Great World Teacher is very likely to cause a certain amount of annoyance. It ought not to. Serene in our belief, we ought to be quite kindly and tolerant and gentle towards the belief of others, even though we know in what particular they are mistaken. You will have a great deal of psychic manifestation of various sorts; some of it will be quite along our lines, and some most certainly will not; therefore you will more than ever have to use your common-sense, and while never denying the possibility of anything that comes in your way, just exercise your judgment about it. Simply say to others as well as yourself (the attitude of Gamaliel, you know, is a very good one): "If this thing be of God then it will prosper; if it be not of God then it will come to naught." But take care lest you should be found to be "fighting against God". One would be disposed to take whatever there was of good from any source of revelation, from any source whatever. That there will be unusual happenings is certain. You have read perhaps *The Light of Asia.* It is a very fairly faithful transcript of the Buddhist books about the Life of the Lord Buddha.

It is mentioned there again and again how hosts of non-human entities knew of His coming and rejoiced in it, how the Devas and nature-spirits everywhere felt His wonderful magnetic influence and gathered round when anything great was going to happen,—for example, when He was about to attain the Buddhahood, or to preach His first Sermon, or, earlier, at the time of His birth. They say that Nature felt His Coming and was responsive. Now there is a vast amount of truth in that. Whenever any very great manifestation of higher power is taking place, the other and more sensitive evolutions do feel it much more than humanity feels it. We ought to feel it more, but we do not. You, I hope, would, because you are turning yourselves in that direction; but the world at large, though more developed than the nature-spirits, is far less responsive because people have developed themselves in the direction of strengthening the lower mind and, practically, perhaps even intentionally, put aside all the things belonging to the more spiritual side of Nature. Thus a human being, although higher in the scale of evolution, is often less sensitive than the lower creatures. I have known of cats and dogs that were more sensitive to higher influences than human beings, not that they could get so much from them, but that they knew of them when human beings did not; they were not so entirely wrapped up in themselves. Man develops far higher thought-power, of course, but then he proceeds to put himself in a shell of his own

thought, and so shuts himself out from what he might learn.

Many strange things will happen, there is no doubt. Remember, too, that those who are to work with the Great Lord of Love are coming into incarnation of necessity. You have no doubt heard of the births of extraordinary children. Well, that is sure to happen, because those who are to be in the prime of life when the Lord comes must already be born, and it is likely that they will differ in certain ways from others. You need never be surprised when you hear of young people who remember previous births, or who have psychic experiences of their own. All these things are quite natural and to be expected, because of the special time in which we live. You may remember how our President made that same remark some time ago to the people at Adyar. She even gave them special directions as to how they should treat such cases as came within their ken. She said: "Do not be excited with regard to any such things, and recount alleged identifications of such children too readily, for very few people know who they were in previous births. Remember that all such children are unusually sensitive; therefore you must be very kind and gentle in your dealings with them. There must never be a harsh word of any sort, you must never startle or alarm them, for remember that they will feel very much more acutely than other children. You must guard them from crowds, or

from the neighbourhood of undesirable people. You should let them know but few people, and should surround them with harmonious magnetism which should not be changed too often. You should not send them to school, but you should surround them with a specially loving home atmosphere."

These were the directions given not long ago by the President with regard to the possibility of those who would come to help in the work of the World Teacher. There will be many of them ; and remember they are quite likely to come amongst you, because you know something of these matters and so would be better able to understand and to do what is required. If you happen to hear of any such cases amongst you, you can pass on the advice of our President.

In all sorts of ways spiritual power will be outpoured from now onwards to the time of His Coming. Very possibly after this great and terrible war is over, we may see a reconstruction, in various ways, such as we could hardly have expected to see in our lifetime; for remember that coming events cast their shadows before and that among the preparations that are being made for the Coming of the Lord is the preparation that is being made by the Hierarchy Itself, and that consists in pouring out floods of influence upon the world—floods of influence which may perhaps touch but little the man who is entirely wrapt up in worldly matters, but which will mean a very great deal to those who are sensitive, to those

who are ready to profit by it. It will mean the making of a new Heaven and a new earth for any one who can open himself to the influence. It may very likely come to pass that quite widely spread changes may be introduced, better than we could have hoped, better than ten years ago we should have thought in the least possible for us to see in our time. That may be even before the Lord comes, so that, when He comes, He can take up all these experiments and beginnings and carry them through to a logical conclusion. So very likely He will leave the world in all sorts of ways very different from the condition in which He finds it. It is not only that He will preach His religion, but it may very well be that all sorts of other reforms may be introduced as a consequence of His teaching. One cannot say, because there will be opposition this time as there was before. All sorts of vested interests will obviously find the changes which He might introduce unsuitable for them; consequently there will be much opposition. The vested interests murdered Him last time after only three years of teaching. How it will be this time we cannot know. We hope, as our President says, that we may prepare at least such a nucleus of people in every country as will make it profitable for Him to stay and work with us longer than three years. We hope so—but how can we tell? We can only do our best. At any rate, I would say with regard to the psychic side of things, be prepared for unusual

happenings. You have all heard what happened on December 28, a few years ago at Benares;—how we had through the body of Alcyone a very wonderful outpouring of the power of the Lord Maitreya. Such a thing as that will occur again. In the outer forms the same thing may manifest itself in connection with others besides Alcyone. Many cases of this sort may come, and remember that you must not expect that all of them will necessarily be within the Theosophical Society. Remember that the Masters influence many people outside of that Society. They care nothing whether the instruments that They use know Them or do not know Them, and therefore you must be prepared to find that, quite outside of our own organisation and our own efforts, other forces are working to the same great goal. And once more, while we follow our own line firmly, strongly, faithfully, loyally, keep to that because that is obviously the way for us, yet we should be very careful not to condemn or to speak against any other form of manifestation, outside our Society, which may be tending in the same general direction, and we must not expect all such manifestations to be all pure, to be all perfect.

You have an organisation, the Order of the Star in the East, which sets itself definitely to prepare the way for the Coming of the Lord, with a full knowledge of what it all means, with a great deal of knowledge, at any rate, as to the line His teaching

will take and so on. But there may very well be individuals or organisations inspired to work in preparation for His Coming without having any means of obtaining such detailed knowledge, and necessarily their work and their teaching will not be so direct and so clear,—so pure, as we should say—as that of the Order of the Star; but nevertheless they may do a great deal of good, and they may very likely reach some people whom we could not reach. Before all things let us beware of condemning hastily anything that may happen, let us be prepared to look favourably upon all manifestations, and to use our reason and common-sense all through. That is the best advice that one can give.

The Master is speaking here in the words just quoted of your having no desire for psychic powers yourself. "And in any case," the Master goes on to say, "the time and strength that it takes to gain them might be spent in work for others." There we have again emphasised what is so emphatically the keynote of this book, that everything should be subordinated to service, that every vestige of selfishness should be removed. Service and unselfishness—that is the point upon which so much insistence is placed in this book. Here He says that to try to develop psychic powers means spending time and strength on yourself, which you might be devoting to the service of others. That is quite true.

They will come in the course of development—they *must* come; and if the Master sees that it would be useful for you to have them sooner, He will tell you how to unfold them safely. Until then, you are better without them.

Yet many people would like to have them. Of course that is quite legitimate. I mean, no one can blame a person for saying: "I hear of these wonderful psychic powers which make their possessor so much more useful. I want to be useful, I would like to have them too." There is nothing wrong in that, only you had better follow the advice which is given here to wait until they come, or until the Master Himself tells you how to open them. "Is He likely to do that?" you will say; yes, my own experience tells me that He is. I had none of these powers. I was not thinking about them in any sort of way, not because I had all these exalted feelings especially, but because I had not thought about the matter, because we were then under a certain mistake with regard to them. We thought in those early days that they could not be developed unless one were born with the psychic vehicles, with a certain amount of psychic faculty to begin with. I had not that, but hoped that in the next life I might perhaps receive a body which would enable me to do these things too. But one day the Master Himself, when visiting Adyar, gave me a hint in that direction. He said: "I should advise you to try a certain sort of meditation," which He recommended, "I think you

will get good results from it." I tried it and got the results. The same thing will be said to every one who works for the Master, when the right time comes. And remember that the reverse is also true, *i.e.*, you will be told when the right time comes. If you have not been told, it is because the right time has not yet come. You may take that as quite certain. In what form He would signify His wish is another matter, but He would signify it in some way or another. What then is the best way to make oneself fit for such an effort? Why, unquestionably there is only one way—to use for service all the powers you have up to the fullest possible extent. Any person who is using all the powers he has for the service of others and without thought of self is very likely to receive new powers. It is the old parable of the talents over again. You may remember that those who made good use of their talents were able to go on and were given charge of far greater work. It was said to each of them: "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." So very few people seem to realise what that means—the joy of the Lord, the joy of the Masters, the joy of the Logos, what is it? It is not any vague pleasure or bliss. The joy of the Logos is in His work; He has thrown Himself absolutely into His work. He has chosen to throw Himself down into this mighty work of evolution—

that is the joy of our Lord, the joy of carrying out this splendid plan of pouring out His love through the universe. So, if you are to enter into the joy of the Lord, then it means that you are to take part in that work and in the bliss which it brings. So if you want to enter into that joy, the way to do it is clearly indicated in that Christian parable,—namely, to use every talent you already have, and see that you are using it quite to the utmost. If you are not yet using all the powers you have, They will wait to give you others until They see you are making full use of what you already have. People do not always understand that. They want to become invisible helpers; we tell them always, "You must be visible helpers first, you must work on the physical plane, you must do all you possibly can there, and then it will be worth while considering whether we cannot make use of you on other planes as well. First on the physical plane where you are fully conscious—if there your whole life is full of helpfulness, then quite certainly you would be helpful on the other planes. I said just now that the Masters often work with people quite outside our organisation. I suppose you can hardly have a more instructive example than the case of our great President. Remember that she came into touch with our Master when she did not know of His existence. She certainly, therefore, was not aspiring towards Him consciously. She was not seeking for Him, but He sought and found her.

It is, of course, true that she had been in relation with Him through many previous lives, but she knew nothing of that in this physical body. She had no idea who this Great One could be, until He came into touch with her. But why did He single her out for this very marked attention? Because she was already devoting the whole of her life and energy to helping other people. She did not know of Theosophy; she could not then be spreading that great truth, but what she did know she was spreading to the best of her ability. She was working and putting all her strength and will into it for the poor, oppressed and helpless, spending herself utterly in their service, and so it was worth the Master's while to reveal Himself to her, because she was already doing just the work that He loves best. She was giving all that she had, and therefore He gave her so much more. It is the old story: "Unto every one that hath shall be given, . . . but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath," which sounds paradoxical and inexplicable; and yet, from the occult point of view, is perfectly clear. You who have powers and use them, to you much more will be given—much more power to be of use. But, from the occult point of view, that which you do not use, you have not, and even that which you seem to have will atrophy and fall away from you. From the occult point of view, it is perfectly clear what that cryptic sentence means. Then the Master

passes on to certain rather smaller matters; at least, He calls them small:

> You must guard, too, against certain small desires which are common in daily life. Never wish to shine, or to appear clever; have no desire to speak.

You know most people rather like to appear clever, to appear to the best advantage. You must make a distinction there; once more the middle path is always the safe one; you must use your reason and common-sense. You must never wish to shine for the sake of shining, but it is your duty to make the best of such powers and qualities as you have in the service of the Master. Use them all for His service, and in His name, and you can never be proud of them. Like so many other difficulties, these very largely dissolve when you come to know the Master. No man who knows the Master personally, who has ever met Him face to face, could ever think about shining himself. When he has seen the glory of the Master, he realises in a moment that anything he could do would be like a farthing rushlight to the Sun; so that the idea does not occur to him. It is born of ignorance. The man who thinks that his tiny light is going to make a vast impression on the world is one who has not seen the higher lights yet, and therefore has not the means of comparing his with those. But in every possible way a man should make the best of every quality that he has in the Master's service. Let the lower lights be born

along the shore; it is not only the mighty beacon of the World Teacher that is needed. That shines out so brightly and so far away that it may dazzle some. Its rays may pass over them and they hardly know of its existence. They do not understand. The lower lights which are nearer to their comprehension might appeal to them. There may be many whom we can help and save, who are as yet not at all ready to be helped and saved by greater people than us. So each has his own place. Yet never desire to shine for the sake of shining, that would be foolish. Never desire to appear clever, but make the best of any quality you have. And He says, "Have no desire to speak." A very difficult thing to get that impressed upon people in these days, very difficult. You were given in another place the Rosicrucian statement, that one of the requirements was that a man should know, should dare, should will, and should keep silent, and they said always that the fourth was harder than the other three. There is so much of talk in these days; you are governed by talk. In England what do we call our main body which makes the laws for us? We call it "Parliament"—from the French *parler*, to "speak". We have much talk and very little doing; in a good many ways it is wiser not to be among those who are always talking.

Pythagoras imposed two years of absolute silence on his candidates—a very good thing it would be if

we had the same rule at the present day, only you cannot live in the world and carry that out. But that we should all be a good deal better if we all talked a good deal less, is probably true. You know people who are always talking cannot always be talking profitably or sensibly; furthermore they cannot always be truthful. That may seem hard. It is true that if people are always talking loosely, quite certainly some of the things which they say will not be true, even though not intentionally untrue. The curious thing is that people so often do not realise the facts of the case. They make all sorts of inaccurate statements, then they say: "Well, I did not mean to be inaccurate, so it does not matter." Do you not realise that it is not what you mean, but what you do, that produces results? If you do a foolish thing the fact that you did it with a good intention does not save it from being a foolish thing, and does not in the least prevent you from getting the physical karma of the foolish thing. Of course you will also get the credit of the good intention. That will make good results, but the foolish thing will bring its bad result, and you will get the karma of that. So with all these rash statements; a person says something, then he corrects himself and says, "I see I was wrong, it is not quite like that." He has told a falsehood; he did not mean it, but he has made an assertion which is not true. That is a falsehood and you cannot get over it, and the fact that

he did not mean it has nothing to do with the case. That he did not mean it is equivalent to the plea: "I did not know it was loaded." You ought to have presumed it was loaded, until you knew it was not. Never make unnecessary statements when you are not sure that they are true, it is better to say nothing, but in any case never go about making a series of rash statements and then contradicting them. These things produce their karmic results. We ought to be a little wiser, we really ought, because we understand how occult forces work and, that being so, it really does behove us to be very careful what we say. This is no new teaching. Remember the Christ said: "For every idle word a man shall speak he shall give an account in the day of judgment." As we should say, it will bring its karma with it. It is true the idle word brings its karma. The spoken word is like an arrow shot from the bow, a bullet from the gun, it has gone and will produce its effect. It might be wise to remember what our President once said: "Every useless word spoken by a student of Occultism is a brick built into the wall that separates him from his Master." That is worth remembering.

Another thing: people who are talking all the time are frittering away a great deal of nervous energy, and you will see, if you watch them, that they never remain quiet; they suffer from little headaches and indispositions and depressions, due to

the loss of the energy which otherwise would have supported them and carried them through. You know the rule given here is an old one:

> It is well to speak little; better still to say nothing, unless you are quite sure what you wish to say is true, kind and helpful. Before speaking think carefully whether what you are going to say has those three qualities; if it has not, do not say it.

It would be a good thing, I imagine, if we set ourselves just for one day to make quite sure that we spoke nothing that was not true, kind and helpful. It would be rather a silent day, but perhaps the world would not lose much. It would be very good for us. Of course it would be impossible for us to carry on a rapid and animated conversation, because we should have to stop and think. That is quite a good thing to do, and that we generally do not do it is proved by the fact that if we had to apply those three criteria to every sentence we spoke we should say very little indeed. You may say, "That is a very hard rule to keep." Well, yes; but remember that these rules are based upon the laws of the higher life. Now the laws of the higher life will not change because you want to reach something to which as yet you have no right. The laws will not change, but you must change to suit those higher laws. It may be thought of as hard, perhaps. If it is too hard for a person, if, after carefully thinking it over, he feels that the demands of the higher life are too hard, very well,

then let him wait a life or two before he tries to make any progress. There is always that open to him. There are plenty of Rounds still ahead, and no one can ever fail; but, in your case, the fact that you are studying these things should show that the laws ought not to be too hard. Hard, yes; but the effort is very well worth the effort of making. But if after all you find you cannot do it, very well, the slower path is still there, it is always open. But if you want to make more rapid progress, you must try to keep these higher rules, even when they seem to conflict altogether with ordinary life and its methods. You cannot do the two things; you cannot have the easy life, and yet make rapid progress, but you can do either one or the other; and remember there is no blame attached to the man who simply does not feel that as yet he is equal to the strain. If you are not willing to make the exertion, take the lower path; but if you insist, as indeed I hope you will, on taking the higher path, then it does mean that you must adapt yourself to the rules of the higher life and the higher worlds, because they will not adapt themselves to you.

XIV

March 16, 1915.

WE are on the thirty-fourth page where the Master says:

> It is well to get used even now to thinking carefully before speaking; for when you reach Initiation you must watch every word, lest you should tell what must not be told.

That might possibly mislead you if you did not understand the facts with regard to Initiation. The real secrets, the secrets of Initiation, cannot be betrayed. If anyone even thought of betraying them, then, before he uttered the words, he would have forgotten that there was anything to betray. Therefore the real secrets are perfectly safe. They never have leaked out and they never will. But though they cannot be divulged, there is still great danger to the divulger; for if he is careless he may put himself in a very awkward position.

He then goes on:

> Much common talk is unnecessary and foolish; when it is gossip, it is wicked.

There you notice again the insistence upon the wickedness of gossip. He says that much common

talk is unnecessary and foolish. So much of what we say is not really necessary. Now I know that sometimes what I suppose we must say is unnecessary talk is nevertheless spoken with intent to please, with intent to help the time to pass pleasantly for some one, and so on. That is the custom, perhaps the unfortunate custom of our period, that we try to pass a great deal of time in talking which really might be employed much more profitably in thinking. But there may be, and I think there must be, legitimately, times when we say things that are not strictly and absolutely necessary just in order to please other people, who would misunderstand us if we were persistently silent. Yet you know quite well that, apart from and outside that, there is a great deal of very unnecessary talk done, and a great deal is said which does not fall under that head at all, apparently just for the sake of saying something. Now that is a mistake. When you have a real friend, a friend whom you can thoroughly trust, you do not feel it necessary to be always talking to that friend. You are friendly enough to be silent together, and yet not to misunderstand one another. That is a test of true friendship —when two people can sit together and be absolutely silent and yet very much enjoy one another's company, and realise a community of thought. If, on the other hand, you are in a condition where you are afraid of gaps in the conversation, so that you must keep on talking, then there will be, unfortunately, a

great deal said which would be much better left unsaid. One who is always talking cannot always be talking wisely. You see it every day. You will not find garrulous people the wisest; you will not find them the greatest thinkers as a rule. He says:

> So be accustomed to listen rather than to talk; do not offer opinions unless directly asked for them.

That is rather an important point. Do not offer opinions unless directly asked for them. As I tell you, some people are always talking, and are always making confident assertions. It would perhaps be favouring them to say that only fifty per cent of these are absolutely wrong. It is generally much more. Some people cannot hear a wrong statement made without instantly contradicting it, and creating a certain amount of disharmony and argument. Do realise that it is not your business to put right everybody who is wrong; it is not your business to correct opinions. If you are asked your opinion on the subject, then state it, but state it very calmly and temperately, and not in a spirit of opposition. Put it very gently. Let the other person talk; it probably pleases him, and does not do you any harm. It is not your business to go about putting everybody right. It is your business to go about helping people as much as you can in a quiet sort of way, but not necessarily to feel that you must set everybody right, and object and protest. You will simply lead yourself into riot

and brawling unending, if you think that you must correct all mis-statements.

Of course, if you hear someone's character taken away then, no doubt, it would be your duty to say: "Excuse me, you are not quite right, it is not true, it is not so." That would be a case of the helpless person being attacked; then it is your duty to defend him. People constantly make all sorts of erratic statements about everything in heaven and earth. It is not your duty to go about setting them right. Let them go. Do not offer opinions unless you are directly asked for them. Do not assume that your opinion is of such surpassing interest to everybody else. It is no use thrusting it upon people. Then He says:

> One statement of the Qualifications gives them thus; to know, to dare, to will, and to be silent; and the last of the four is the hardest of them all.

That is the Rosicrucian statement: "To know, to dare, to will, and to be silent." Yes, you must know the truths of nature, you must dare to use them, to use the great powers that come in your way. You must have a tremendous will to control them, and control yourself too. Then, when you have done all these things, you must know enough to be silent about them. Yes, it is not easy, I know, but one can see quite well how important it is.

Here you get another variant of the same thing.

> Another common desire which you must sternly repress is the wish to meddle in other men's business. What

another man does or says or believes is no affair of yours, and you must learn to let him absolutely alone.

There it is again: a man makes a blatant statement of his belief. Well, let him. He may choose to believe that the earth is flat or that the Sun goes round it; let him. It is his own affair. You know you are not bound to start out as a schoolmaster. If you were in the position of a schoolmaster and were appointed to teach certain boys, then you would gently, quietly correct them, because that would be your duty. That is what you are there for. But you are not appointed as a schoolmaster to the general public, and there is no reason why you should be perpetually correcting wrong statements, above all why you should interfere with other people's beliefs and actions, so long as their actions are not obviously to the common harm in some way. A man may so comport himself as to be a nuisance to his neighbours. Then it may sometimes be your duty to suggest something. In very many cases you do not even do that you simply go away in order that you may escape from that particular nuisance. It is not your business to start out correcting people. If we could remember that, we should save ourselves a vast amount of trouble. This wish to meddle in other people's business is so common. The Master says here:

He has full right to free thought and speech and action, so long as he does not interfere with any one else. You yourself claim the freedom to do what you think

proper; you must allow the same freedom to him, and when he exercises it you have no right to talk about him.

If he does something which is quite different from what you would do, you have no right to start gossiping and chattering about that. Let the man go his own way so long as he is doing no harm to you or anyone else. He has the right of freedom.

We boast so much of freedom—we of the Anglo-Saxon race—yet we are not in the least free really, for we are hidebound by custom to an almost inconceivable degree. You know that is so. You know that you are not really free at all. You cannot dress as you like, you cannot go about as you would choose. You might select for yourself (I think I suggested it to you before) the ancient Greek dress; it is probably one of the most beautiful in the world. But if you put it on and walked down the street you would probably have a crowd of people round you, and you would probably be arrested for disturbing the traffic. You are not free at all. In any properly arranged country you would be quite free to dress as you liked, to do as you liked, as long as you did not make yourself a nuisance to others. But there is no real freedom at all. You cannot depart from the line which other people take; or at least you may depart from it only very slightly, otherwise a great deal of trouble and disturbance is caused. It is a pity, because real freedom would be so very much better for all concerned, especially for those who want to

interfere with others. We have no real freedom, we have only pretence.

Then He says:

> If you think he is doing wrong, and you can contrive an opportunity of privately and very politely telling him why you think so, it is possible that you may convince him; but there are many cases in which even that would be an improper interference.

But you see the only way in which it is thought of as possible that you could do or say anything in the matter would be by going to the man privately and speaking very politely and delicately to him, and suggesting something.

> On no account must you go and gossip to some third person about the matter, for that is an extremely wicked action.

Once more you see how strongly He regards gossip. Then He mentions certain exceptions. He says:

> If you see a case of cruelty to a child or an animal, it is your duty to interfere.

That is because cruelty is an abuse of strength, because the helpless who cannot protect themselves must be protected by all right feeling and right thinking people. That is the very reason why this Empire is at war at this moment protecting the helpless, protecting a country not strong enough to protect itself. That probably is an absolutely right one. "If you see a case of cruelty to a child or an

animal, it is your duty to interfere," but that is because they are helpless, they cannot protect themselves. Then He gives us a second case:

> If you see anyone breaking the law of the country, you should inform the authorities.

A great deal has been said about that passage, and various people have taken exception to that,— rather curiously, I think, because you know that, as a matter of fact, if you conceal a crime you become an accessory to that crime before the fact, or after the fact as the case may be, and you are so regarded by the law. People say: "But are you to spy upon others to see whether they are breaking the law?" Certainly not. You are not constituted a detective to go and find people breaking the law. The words are: "If you see anyone breaking the law of the country, you should inform the authorities." You must remember that law gives cohesion to a country, that it is law which establishes order for the good of all; therefore it is the duty of every citizen to uphold the law. But then you may think that some laws are trifling and unnecessary. Yes, that is probably true, and therefore there are difficulties made. You get a law, for example, like that against smuggling. The imposition of customs duties, well, that is the law of the country in which you happen to reside, or happen to be born. I should say that a good citizen would obey that law. I

should not myself think of endeavouring to smuggle goods of any sort. At the same time that seems to me to be a matter which is open to opinion; and if other people are doing that, I do not see that it is my duty to inform the authorities, because that is not a matter of breaking a law which injures anyone else. I should not myself break it, because I think that when a law is made it should be obeyed. If it is a bad law I think that we should endeavour to use constitutional means to change it. But I do not think it well that any private citizen should break a law. You have laws in some cases which it would be difficult to obey. You have, I believe, a law of compulsory vaccination. Personally, I should object to be vaccinated, and should refuse to be vaccinated except by major force. I should be prepared to go to prison rather than have that done, because the thing itself is an evil thing. But these are all matters on which each person must pass his own judgment. Let us take, for example, the question of trespassing on another man's property. If you see a man taking a short cut across another man's park, I do not think you thereby bound to go and say so. If you are asked, then of course you must say so. In India (you must always remember that this was written by an Indian boy, and that the Master, Himself, Who gave the teaching, is an Indian) it is especially laid down what crimes must be reported, if seen. That is, of course, all the serious crimes. If you see a murder,

it is your duty to report it; if you see a robbery, then again it is your duty to give information. But with regard to a host of these minor things, it is not legally, in India, making yourself an accessory by not reporting it. I presume that may be the same here. I do not see that you could be considered an accessory to smuggling or to trespass, or to any smaller thing like that, but you certainly would be in regard to a murder or a robbery or anything of that sort. I think that is a matter for the application of common-sense. If you see anyone breaking any of those greater laws, it would be wrong for you to allow them to be broken without the protest which is involved in reporting the case. If it be a case of these quite minor regulations and by-laws, then it seems to me to be another matter; and, as I say, in India the thing is definitely laid down by statute, and therefore one may suppose that the Master Who spoke, being an Indian, knew that; so that I do not think that we need find any difficulty in that sentence through interpreting it as an injunction to us to spy upon or to interfere with our neighbours. Remember that we have just been told that we are not to interfere with them unless they are doing harm to a third person.

Then the third case:

> If you are placed in charge of another person in order to teach him, it may become your duty gently to tell him of his faults.

Well, that is fairly obvious. Of course, a child, a pupil, or a servant, is placed in your charge because you are older and wiser. If you do not tell him of any faults he commits, then he is losing the advantage of your age and wisdom and experience ; therefore you are so far failing in your duty towards him, failing to do that which you were placed there to do.

He says :

> Except in such cases, mind your own business, and learn the virtue of silence.

It does not seem difficult to mind your own business, but very few people can do it—remarkably few. Of course you can see exactly what is meant, that the general attitude of tolerance and goodwill should replace what is so painfully common at present, the attitude of interference and criticism. If a person is seen doing something quite unusual, I am afraid many people come to the conclusion that he has some nefarious reason for doing so. It does not at all follow. He may have his own private reasons, and anyhow, unless he is doing something clearly wrong and interfering with others, let him go his way and do what he will. You see, like some of our other common faults of the present day, this comes largely from an excess of our Fifth-Race and Fifth-sub-race qualities. We are developing the qualities of the lower mind, and that, carried to excess, makes us in this Fifth-Sub-race liable to be aggressive and combative and argumentative—

quite unnecessarily so. Now it may be well worth your while to remember that you, as students of Occultism, are specially supposed to be trying to develop the next quality, Buddhi,—the unifying quality, that which gives you synthesis rather than analysis, that which tries to see the points of contact, instead of points of difference, tries to bring unity in the place of diversity. The development of that will be the business of the Sixth Root Race, and also, of course, in a subsidiary way, of the Sixth Sub-race, which is now dawning upon us here and in America. Therefore it is for you to be pioneers in that matter, for you to try to be a little in advance of the average, and if the average are still labouring away, perhaps too strongly, at the qualities of the Fifth Sub-race, to try to develop the qualities of the future, of the Sixth Sub-race. Begin to look for points of agreement. Remember the Master's phrase: "There is a criticism which pounces upon a pearl as readily as your criticism flies at a flaw," and that is our kind of criticism. We should develop in ourselves that kind of spirit as much as we can. Do not try to find faults, try to find things that are pleasant, things that you can commend; and in the other case, mind your own business, and learn the virtue of silence. In the Theosophical Society we uphold the idea of brotherhood, and this is a practical way of showing brotherhood. Instead of finding faults, find

the good points, find something not to blame but to praise. There is something to blame in everybody and everything if you look for it, but there is no reason why you should concentrate your attention exclusively on the blameworthy things and put aside the good qualities. Let us do exactly the opposite. You may be quite sure that the rest of the world will attend to the business of blaming. We might try to bring down the other side of the balance a little, and try to praise them. The faults will not go without being pointed out; but you can afford to leave that to the general public, who will do it with more gusto than you would, but pick out the good things; it is a good exercise, because until you really begin to look for them you will not find them. We really do not understand how many good things there are in everybody until we begin to look for them. You will find all kinds of beautiful qualities in people whom you have been regarding very unfairly as representing chiefly one characteristic. If you think of the opinions which you form about other people whom perhaps you do not know very well (about your friends, we hope, you have time to discover their real qualities) you will see what I mean. About other people you mostly form your opinions from one or two things. You saw them looking angry; you probably think of them as irritable people. You saw them one day looking discontented; you therefore put them down as

usually that sort of person. That may be absolutely unfair; you may have simply stumbled upon the man just at the most awkward moment, and his life in a general way may not be at all coloured with what for you stands for him. It is a very unfair labelling. Look for the good things and label your people by those for a while. I dare say you might—it is not very probable—err on the good side, and give a person a little more credit than is his due, but that would not hurt you or the person. It is very much better to think too well of hundreds and hundreds of people than think too badly of one. Let us follow the lines of the Sixth Sub-race: let us be buddhic to that extent, that we look for the things that are good and not for the things that are evil. It is a thing which you ought to have in mind. That which you think about, you intensify. Fasten your thoughts upon somebody's faults and you intensify that person's faults; the other thing is also true, fasten your attention on the good qualities and you will intensify them. So I say let us be buddhic to that extent.

CHAPTER III

GOOD CONDUCT

THAT brings us to our thirty-eighth page, where we come to the third of the qualifications. We have already had Discrimination and Desirelessness, now we come to that which the Master calls: "Good Conduct." It has been rather differently translated: in Pali, as arranged by the Lord Buddha, this qualification is called *Upacaro*, and that means attention, as well as conduct. It does mean conduct, but it also means attention; the things to which you attend most govern your conduct. That is the idea; and always this particular qualification of conduct, or of the things requiring attention, has been subdivided into six parts, which the Hindus call the *Shatsampatti*, the six jewels of good conduct. They are spoken of here as six points. The Master plunges straight into the thing and says:

The six points of Conduct which are specially required are given by the Master as:

1. Self-control as to the Mind.
2. Self-control in Action.
3. Tolerance.
4. Cheerfulness.
5. One-pointedness.
6. Confidence.

Then immediately afterwards Alcyone says, and not the master,—you see it is put in brackets so that you may know:

(I know some of these are often translated differently, as are the names of the Qualifications; but in all cases I am using the names which the Master Himself employed when explaining them to me.)

They are very often spoken of by the names of the first two. You will find these qualifications as *Samo*, *Damo*.

Samo, the first, literally means "quietude".

Damo means subjugation.

But one is quietness of mind; and the other is subjugation of the lower nature, so that one's emotions are in accord with the higher thoughts and thus you have self-control in action. That is the strict translation of the Pali words.

Then the third, *Uparati*, which the Master gives as "toleration," really means "cessation"; but it is always translated as cessation from bigotry, cessation from any belief in the necessity of particular ceremonies or rites. So you see it comes to mean the same thing as tolerance, but that is the literal translation of the word.

The fourth, *Tittikka*, is literally translated "endurance". The Master goes a little bit further and says you must not only endure, but you must endure cheerfully.

The fifth point is *Samadana*, in Pali, and it does mean practically that; it means "intentness,"

as nearly as one can get it. I took a certain amount of trouble over all these qualifications and not only had them looked up in all the principal dictionaries, but got statements of the current belief of the living Buddhist Church in the matter. I got the translation from the High Priest Sumangala, who was the head of the Southern Buddhist Church, and among all these words he himself gave me that as the nearest English equivalent. Mrs. Besant has translated *Samadana* as this intentness, as balance. I think she would tell you that that is not exactly a translation, but rather that that is the idea which she associates with it. The man acquires the balance by always keeping before him the object of his journey, of his development; and therefore he is not pushed aside, but preserves his balance by means of this one-pointedness and intentness.

The last word is *Shraddha*, which is practically the same word as faith, meaning confidence in the Master and in oneself, in the Divine Spirit within one. We shall take up those in detail as we go on, but I am just giving you the literal translation of the Pali words in order that you may see how the different translations have been arrived at. It is obvious that the Master here, in His presentation of the qualifications, has aimed all through at giving us the practical meaning of the thing, rather than at adhering to the literal translation of the word. You see the best example of that is the one to which we shall come

later on. He gives the last qualification as Love instead of taking its real meaning, the intense desire for liberation. Even as to that there is a certain difference, because although that is the Sanskrit word, in Pali it is called *Anuloma*, which means "direct order and sequence," and what they mean to imply by that is, that anyone who has acquired all these other three qualifications must be filled with this inward desire for liberation from the wheel of birth and death. But the Master quite boldly has put it as Love, and that is because He is preaching the Gospel of the Lord Maitreya who is to come. These little differences are interesting to us, because they show the difference between the presentment of the Lord Maitreya and His mighty predecessor, the Lord Gautama. The words which I have given are the words of the Lord Gautama, and the English translation of them is that of one of the most learned of His living followers. The latter has died since. But the presentation which the Master Koot Hoomi has given us here is that which He has learned from the Great World Teacher—the presentment of Love rather than Wisdom alone. Then He goes on to take them one by one:

1. *Self-control as to the Mind* is the first point. Control of temper means of course control of emotion, and there you come to a point that has often caused a good deal of trouble to students. You know that in these days we try to be as accurate as we can

in the detail of our statements as to planes and vehicles, and so what we speak of to you as the astral body is one thing, the etheric double is another and the mental body is quite a third. But in the earlier writings Madame Blavatsky introduced a number of terms which have confused people. She spoke of the *kama-rupa*,—now rupa means body and kama means desire ; therefore *kama-rupa* means the body of desire, one would say,—namely, the astral body. Yes, but strictly speaking it appears to be used only when you are speaking of the lowest part of the astral body, the coarse desire to which alone the name of *kama* is given. It is very like our word "desire" ; when we mean a really high desire we call it an aspiration.

That *kama* seems to refer only to quite the lower sub-planes of the astral, and then you come to deal with the higher sub-planes from the first to the fourth, Madame Blavatsky used to speak of them as *kama-manasic*. *Manas* means lower mind, but distinctly it is mental. So you have the distinction of *kama-manasic* which has led to a great deal of confusion. It seems clear that when she spoke of the *kama-rupa* she meant only the actual desire body ; that is to say, that part of the astral body which is composed of quite the lowest astral matter, the fifth, sixth, and seventh sub-planes of it. When she spoke of the *kama-manasic* body she meant the higher astral body, where it is already permeated by thought,

because that is what emotion is. Emotion is desire transmuted into thought and permeated by thought. The confusion is liable to arise because those things are not separate bodies. It is a confusion similar in nature to that which arises when we speak of the higher part of man's physical body as his etheric double. Madame Blavatsky, misled by her translators, called that the astral body, and thereby laid up much trouble for some of her students, but the etheric is not a separate thing. You can live in the physical body, which contains the etheric as well as the dense physical, and you can live and function in the astral body which contains both the *kama-rupa* and the *kama-manasic* vehicle, but they are all one. It is a mistake to speak of them as vehicles, which gives the idea that they are separate things which you can use separately. Remember that when she speaks of *kama-manasic* she is thinking of those higher astral sub-planes and of that higher part of the astral body where it begins to be very much permeated by thought. But when she speaks of the *kama-rupa* she means the blind desire of quite the lower parts of the astral body.

I shall have something more to say to you about that next time. You will see that in the later writings we have avoided those names, just because we found that they led to confusion. You must not jump to the conclusion that these earlier writings are wrong, or that Madame Blavatsky was

loose or inaccurate in her statements. She saw what she described, she knew very well of what she was speaking and gave it the name suggested by her helpers. She says there are many such mistakes in all her books. But when we have sometimes thought that we have found one of those mistakes, further study has generally revealed the fact that it was we who were in error,—that we had not grasped what she had meant.

There may be mistakes, but there are very few of them, and we do not know much about them.

XV

March 23, 1915.

WE had commenced the third of the qualifications which contains the six points of conduct, and had been speaking of the difference between the teachings of the Lord Gautama and the Lord Maitreya.

You may remember that, in this " self-control as to the mind," I had just mentioned that it meant control not only of the vehicles, but of the emotions which played through them, and had said that, while the lower part of the astral body was concerned exclusively with desires, the higher part of it was concerned with those desires which allied themselves with thought, and were permeated with it—those, namely, which we call emotions, those things of which Madame Blavatsky always spoke of as *kama-manasic*, *i.e.*, as sharing something of the mental as well as something of the astral.

Now, in explaining that, the Master says this self-control of the mind means " control of temper, so that you may feel no anger or impatience ". Now, that control of temper is precisely one of the things that is very difficult indeed for us, under the peculiar circumstances of which I have several times spoken to

you. The fact is that we are trying a new experiment, trying to raise ourselves in evolution, which means very rapidly refining all our vehicles and making them more and more sensitive, and yet we are doing it while remaining in the midst of, say, a city like this, instead of going away into the jungle, or shutting ourselves up in a monastery with others who are like-minded. It is precisely that condition of affairs which makes certain of the achievements so difficult for us. Not that we could not achieve them, but that the surroundings make it terribly difficult for us. If you lived only with those who thought as you do, in a monastery, with people whose minds were exclusively attuned to the same ideas as your own, or if you lived away by yourself in a jungle, there would be very little to irritate you, your thoughts would run along whatever line you chose, and nothing would interfere with or interrupt your thoughts. But that is constantly happening to us here. Not only that, but we perforce meet great numbers of people, and we have to learn to get on with them, although in some ways, perhaps, they may be very different from ourselves, their thoughts and their general line of life being quite different. So it makes the control of nerves and of temper a much more difficult thing for us than it generally has been for aspirants in the past. Nevertheless, as I have said to you before in speaking of other things, if we can do it and if we can attain the victory then it is

so much the greater victory, because of these difficulties which mean that we have already progressed so much farther in strength of will than the monk or the hermit. If we can live the unruffled existence, we have gone much further than he, because we are living it under different conditions. But there are peculiarities with regard to it. Take this matter, for instance, of control of temper. There are two things which can happen here. Some people first of all learn to repress the outward manifestation of it, but still for a long time feel the inner irritability. They learn not to do or say anything. That is already a very considerable victory; but, of course, before they have really conquered finally they must get rid of the very feeling itself inside. That is harder. That is one way, and I think that it is the more general way. But with some people, a smaller number, I think, the thing acts in a precisely different way. They do succeed in weeding out the angry feeling, and yet it is very difficult to control the outer vehicles. You may still get a movement of impatience, when really the feeling which would have been behind that has absolutely gone. That is a thing which sometimes persists. That is not so bad as having the feeling and not showing it, but we must get rid of it because it misleads other people.

The perfect control, of course, must be obtained, because, unless one's emotions have reached a stage where they cannot be upset, one cannot really think

clearly. Supposing you wish to write, or anything of that sort. If your astral body is swirling with emotion, it will invariably colour your thought. It will prevent your thought from focusing itself on what you want to do. You will find, I think, that, when you sit down to write on any subject, make notes for a lecture, write a serious essay, it will pay you to be quiet for a few moments and steady yourself. If you could see clairvoyantly—perhaps some of you can—the average astral body, you would know exactly what I mean. Take any person you meet in the street—not a bad man, just the ordinary average man—and look at the man's astral body. You will see that the whole thing is a swirling mass, that, instead of lying in certain striations, where the colours are clearly marked and are circulating as they should do, you will see perhaps fifty or sixty little vortices, little whirlpools on the surface of his astral body, in violent circulation, and each one of them, because of the rapidity of its motion, making a hard knot something like a wart on the physical body. These things stud the man's astral body all over. While he is in that state it is quite impossible for him to think with the clearness and the definiteness which he could command if he got all that into order; and therefore most men's thoughts are never clear, and their emotions are never definite or one-pointed, because there are all these little whirls going on all the time. But most men live like that, and they are

used to it. If you analyse them and try to see what they are and what they mean, you will find that they all refer themselves either to some little outburst of temper, or little worries, or little feelings of offence, jealousy, envy, perhaps even of hatred, which the man has had some time within the last forty-eight hours, because such things persist about that length of time, if not longer. But if the man should renew the same kind of thought about the same person he will make a much larger vortex, which will last much longer. If however he thinks only one angry thought about a person, that will set up one of these disturbances in the matter of his astral body which will last a couple of days or so. He forgets that he has had the transitory feeling of annoyance. It is gone, and he thinks the effect is gone. It has not gone at all; it is still there, and it lies there, as I say. Most men contrive to keep up their stock of these vortices pretty well always at the same level. They are always dotted over with these things, which utterly, absolutely warp them from thinking or feeling as they otherwise would. I am not speaking of a bad, of an impulsive or passionate man, just the ordinary man in the street. Nine out of ten would be like that. They have no idea of it themselves.

All that sort of thing is so customary in everyday life that one has to take it all for granted. You can see that, when the man comes into Occultism, he must change all that, because then he wants to use

the mental and astral bodies for really valuable work. He wants to help his fellow men and first of all he wants to control these vehicles for himself. It is no sort of control if he allows them to break out into a kind of eruption, a kind of disease. All those things, from the point of view of psychic force, are like open sores. The will-power of the man is leaking out all the time. If you want to conserve your energies and do good work with them, the first thing you will have to do is to check all these sources of waste. Supposing you want to put out a fire, you must have your jet of water. It must be pumped at very high pressure and of course there must be absolutely no leak in the machinery and in the vessel into which the water is poured. Here is the case of a man who has in his vessel nothing but leaks, it is all full of holes; and yet that man would probably expect, if he knew anything about it, to have will enough to do something. How can he, when his force is all leaking away like that? That being the case with the average man, when you get a person who is by nature a worrier, naturally you have a very much worse case still,—a person who is all one sore, so to speak, so that there is no force left. It is all spent in that sort of thing.

We are fatally inexact in our thoughts about these things very often. I have said this before, but it is worth while repeating. We have a heritage of inexactitude from our forefathers. It has been the

custom for so long, in these countries, to regard religious matters as something apart from practical life, something by which you do not live in business hours; and so it is very difficult for you, I know, to understand the reality of these things. I tell you about these things. Other people tell you, who have seen, and you take it all, and quite believe it; but still it is to you rather as if it were some kind of symbol, a kind of poetic expression. It is a hard and scientific fact that most men you meet in the street, when you walk away from here, are simply allowing their force to ooze out of themselves all over, and that this is why they have so little force left. You know the average man seems as if he had no particular will. When trouble comes, he simply lies down under it and groans and complains about it, instead of directing his will towards it and trying to make something of it. Most people have very little force. Of course there are two reasons for that. The force, the power in any man, is precisely in proportion to his knowlege of the true self, the extent to which the One Self, The Deity, is unfolded within him. We are all just as strong as one another really, you know; it is only that question of how much of that true inner Divine strength we have unfolded in ourselves. A man has perhaps not unfolded very much of that divine strength to begin with, and whatever he has he is wasting. At any rate, whatever the average man has he is wasting sedulously in all these

petty little worries, in all these little feelings and thoughts which he ought not to have. He does not know any better ; he is quite unaware of his painfully diseased condition.

You ought to be on your guard against things of that sort, and ought to see to it that these vehicles of yours are calm. If they are not calm, you must take hold of them and make them calm. They are, after all, your vehicles. The only reason for their existence is that they may be vehicles for the ego within you, and the ego must take hold of them and manage them. So, you see, that is why those who know insist upon calm. Some of you would like to do good work in meditation. Some of you would like to realise the presence of the Masters, to bring through psychic influences and feelings. But all these things must come down to you through these different vehicles ; they must be, as it were, reflected from one to another (reflected is not quite the word, but we may take it for the moment). Now look at the reflection of a group of trees in the surface of a lake. If that lake is calm you get a perfect picture, you can see every leaf, but the least ripple breaks your picture altogether. If there is a storm, it is still more hopeless. That is exactly true with regard to these higher vehicles. You must keep them calm, you must hold them still, if through them any true or reliable or valuable influences are to come from above. People say perpetually : " Why don't we remember

all that we do in our sleep?" That is one of the reasons why you do not, because your vehicles are not quiet enough. Very rarely, now and again, you may get them quiet enough to bring something through. But even then you distort it somewhat, because the medium is not perfectly clear. It is like looking at something through plate glass and then through something cheap like bottle glass. You will find that it altogether alters the proportion of things. That is what happens to your various vehicles unless they are perfectly strong. It is very difficult to get them perfectly strong, to control your temper, nerves and so on; but it has to be done, and until it is done you are not making the most of your force. You are not doing all you can in the Master's service. If you saw a few astral bodies for yourself, you would realise at once that the wonder is not that people rarely remember anything, but that anybody ever remembers anything at all, considering the conditions.

When you have got these things calm, you can work in the midst of disturbance and trouble; but of course it is a great strain to hold the bodies calm under these conditions. It is so great a strain that that some people cannot do it at all. Well, they must gradually acquire strength. The Occultist, you know, learns to work, as it were, on two planes at once, to be partly out of his vehicles at the same time that he is working on the physical plane, so that while he is writing or speaking, he may at the same

time with his astral body be doing other things. I have heard it said, for example, to give you an instance which you all know something about, that when I lecture, say on a Sunday night, various people among you have seen astral entities standing on the platform and coming up and speaking to me. That is truly seen so far, and it is quite often the case that various astral entities come running up; they want information of various sorts, they want answers to questions, or they want something done, while you still go on with the lecture. You have to learn how to do these things, and although that happens every Sunday night, I dare say you do not notice any serious lack of continuity.

That is only a small and passing example. There are much more serious pieces of work than that to be done. It is true that the Occultist does learn to use his consciousness in that complicated kind of way. You can do it with things to which you are accustomed; a lady can knit and go on talking, because the knitting is a mechanical thing to her. I have myself seen curious examples of the same power of double concentration. I had much to do once with one of the great banks in London, and I have seen there how men who were used to it could go on adding up enormous columns of figures and they could sing a song at the same time for the entertainment of their fellows. I must admit it would be impossible to me, but I have seen it done over and over again.

That is the sort of way one may learn to do two things at once if one has one's mind fairly in order and one is fairly sure of one of the things, but it is a difficult business, this control of the mind. The Master speaks here of control.

> Of the mind itself, so that the thought may always be calm and unruffled; and (through the mind) of the nerves, so that they may be as little irritable as possible. This last is difficult, because when you try to prepare yourself for the Path, you cannot help making your body more sensitive, so that its nerves are easily disturbed by a sound or a shock, and feel any pressure acutely.

You see the physical body is that over which the will has the least power. People often say, "Oh, yes, you can learn to do a thing with your physical body, you may even control your feelings; but it is a much harder thing to control your thoughts." I know that it is a popular idea that of all things it is the most difficult. In one way it is; because the mental matter is finer and much more active, there is very much more to control in the way of motion, in the way of initiative. On the other hand you must not forget that the mental body is very much nearer to the ego within, very much nearer to the spirit, and very much more under his control. There are greater forces that he can grasp with mental matter and deal with, whereas it is very hard for him to get right down to the physical plane and control the physical matter. We think it easier because while we are in the habit of

controlling our physical body, we are not in the habit of controlling the mental body; so we think the physical body the easiest, but it is the most difficult really, because of the fact that it is further away, that it is more material and therefore less responsive. People say that you can control pain on the physical plane. You can up to a large extent, you can ignore it. They say you cannot ignore the mental suffering. Now really exactly the contrary is true. The most difficult thing to ignore is severe physical pain. The mental or emotional suffering ceases to exist at all if you just grasp it and put it away from you; but it is not so easy to put away severe physical pain in that way. It can be very largely diminished by removing from it the mental element. We suffer a a great deal more than the actual physical pain; we think about it and magnify it to ourselves. That is the way the Christian Scientist gets such a hold. He eliminates all the mental part of the pain by declaring there is no pain. To a very large extent that is because he believes only in the physical side of it, and the physical side of it is a comparatively small side often. You may see that in various ways. First of all you can all ignore frightful physical pain under sufficient stimulus. Suppose a mother to be suffering terrible physical pain of some sort; if she sees her child in danger she will forget all about it to rush and save it. Now you can learn to do that without the stimulus. You can learn so to control

the mind that you can eliminate the mental part of purely physical suffering. You will be surprised to see how much effect it will have if you try an experiment. We have to try it constantly, because the pupils of the Masters have to make themselves exceedingly sensitive, and it is the most acute torture to go about in a city like this, to go along George Street with the tremendous roar and all sorts of hideous noises. All these things are a passing annoyance to you, or you get used to them; but they become acute torture to anybody who is a pupil, who is trying to reach the higher planes. But he has to learn to eliminate the mental part of it, to leave the outer things to themselves, to some extent, and not impart any thought to it that might serve to make it stronger. It goes all through your physical body and makes it shiver, but if you think about it, it makes it much worse; whereas, if you take no notice of it, at least you feel it less.

That is the same all the way through. You can learn to repress quite a great deal, and that is what the Christian Scientist does. He removes the irritation of the mental part of the pain, and thereby not only gets rid of a great deal of the pain, but gives the physical body time to get better. Leave nature to itself. Most people will not give the unfortunate body time to get well on the physical plane. The moment we begin to feel ill we bring in a mental factor which makes things very much worse. The

Christian Scientist learns to eliminate the mental factor. If this is eliminated the wound, if it is a wound, heals much more quickly. Nature has a chance then.

You see the same thing, though from a different point of view, with animals. You know, perhaps, if you ever saw a horse with a broken leg, that the poor creature will eat dragging his broken limb behind him, and go on quite contentedly. You could not do that, because you think about it. Mind, it is not that he suffers any less. His nerves are more sensitive than those of a man, so the physiologists tell us, but he can do what you cannot, because he does not think. Of course, he gains that particular immunity by not being able to think about anything else, but the fact remains that the creature that does not think about it suffers very much less. Surely we, having risen to the level where we can think, might also control our thought and decline to make things worse. You can eliminate all worry under that scheme, absolutely cut out the possibility of worry of any kind by controlling the mind. That I think we shall find mentioned directly.

The greater the sensitiveness, the more difficult is the task of the student. Whether he is a pupil or not, he has to strain himself to a certain extent. He has to key himself up to do his work. All of you are trying meditation, and that must make you more sensitive than the people who do not meditate, and

because of that the strain on the physical body is enormous. You perhaps have all heard that Madame Blavatsky, our great Founder, used sometimes to have outbursts of temper as it seemed. Well, there was a very great reason for that. It is no use telling the outside people; the outer world does not understand these things. They say a spiritual teacher ought to be perfectly controlled. Certainly, but she had a very unfortunate physical body. I suppose that there never was an hour when she had not very acute suffering with that body. It was old, it was broken down and worn out, but it was the only body available for the particular work she had to do, and she had to keep it, she could not throw it away as many of us might do. As a matter of fact, the opportunity was once offered to her to do that. She said: "No, I will hold it until I have finished *The Secret Doctrine*," the work on which she was engaged. That meant that the physical body was in a condition of terrible strain, and sometimes she let it do what it liked, so to speak; she just let it go. Of course people did not understand. We around her got to understand presently that those things did not mean much. We had very curious instances of that. For example, she would be in a wild tirade, apparently quite furious about some trifling things—her coffee being cold or something of that sort—but while the newer people, who did not know, shrank away from her in fear, we discovered

that if in the middle of that wild tirade you suddenly asked her a philosophical question, the whole thing dropped off, was cut off as you might cut off a stick with a knife, and immediately she slipped out of the furious rage and proceeded to answer that question. That showed that it was not an ordinary temper. If you were in an ordinary furious rage you could not do that. I have seen her do that many times. We tried experiments, finding it interesting. I have been the instrument myself of asking the question. We were not told all that I am telling you, we had to try to approach the problem from outside; and it was not easy for us, because we knew nothing of all these inner workings. So many people misunderstood and were thrown off, but I can see quite well now that she could not help it. Otherwise her body would have broken.

Then the Master winds up by saying: "This last is difficult, . . . but you must do your best." That is very consoling. He puts it in that way: "You must do your best." There are two tendencies our members have. One is to be careless and just let it go, and say it does not matter very much. That is bad. The other is to torment oneself unnecessarily, to magnify small feelings into great sins; and really I think that that is almost worse than the other. That morbid introspection is a terrible thing. It is like little children, who, when they have a garden, pull up their plants by the roots to see how they

are growing. A great many people do that about their spiritual growth, to see how they are improving. This is a specimen of the kind of thing: a person eagerly takes up some good and noble work, some philanthropic work, and then begins to doubt. He says: "I am not sure; it must have been because I was inwardly proud." Or if you relieve suffering you think: "It was not really unselfish, I could not bear to see the suffering because it hurt me, and so I relieved it; it was really very selfish of me." Now there is no reason nor sense in that; but you cannot even argue with such people. It is a serious thing to get into that state. Yon may get your conscience into the same state as the astral body that I was talking about. You may get it like your overstrained nerves. You may brood over little failures and magnify them into great crimes. You should remember, because you must have common-sense about these things, that thinking over faults strengthens them. I have told you that often with regard to other people; if you think of another man's faults and concentrate your thoughts upon them, even though your intention may be to help that man, you are not helping him. You should concentrate your thought on the opposite virtue and flood him with that, but you must not think of the vice, because to do that only intensifies it. Remember that the same thing is true about yourself. If you look back over some evil you think you have

committed and go on repenting, you are making a stronger and stronger thought-image of that evil, which will react on you in the future. There is no common-sense in that kind of thing; it is the old Christian idea about the miserable sinner. You know in the Litany we say: "Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners." We are all of us sinners, but we need not aggravate the offence by being "miserable" sinners. It does aggravate the offence, because you proceed to make a number of other people miserable. It is always a mistake, it is one of the worst heritages Christianity has left to those who follow it, this idea of repentance. Remember the words of one of our own Masters: "The only repentance worth having is the resolve not to do it again," absolutely the only one. It is very strongly put in *The Voice of the Silence*, "Look not behind or thou art lost." Do not look back on the faults and failings. Just take the lesson, and do not make the same mistake twice. Talleyrand said: "Any man may make a mistake once, but only a fool makes the same mistake twice." Many of us do it more than twice before we learn. There is enough in that to make it clear to you that this idea of repentance is a mistaken one, is not the way to approach the thing. You are sorry, because you missed an opportunity. It is no use being sorry when the thing is done, and the best thing you can do is to set to work and try to do something which will make up for the failure. Always the best thing to do

is not to brood over the past, but to set to work to do better in the future. People constantly say: "If I had not done this or that, such and such things would not have happened." That may be true or not, but anyhow it is useless, because you have done the thing and you must start from a new platform. Start from that as a new basis. It is no use wishing you had not done so and so. Say: "I did that; it is a pity, but never mind. Here is this present condition of affairs. What is the best I can do now?" "Let the dead past bury its dead." Mind, I do not say that there may not sometimes come to us an opportunity even of altering the past, but we know nothing about it yet. You will see hints of that in Mr. Jinarajadasa's books. Once or twice our President has hinted at it, but we know nothing of it at present, at any rate. So far as we know, the past is past, and you cannot alter it. The Christian has said: "God Himself cannot alter the past." I am not so sure. At any rate, if there be any possibility of altering it, it belongs to higher levels and it is not for us now. Put the past aside, just go on where you are. Do not worry about what might have been if you had not done this or that action. Numbers of people worry themselves; some, like that, about the past, and others about the future. It is simply silliness, all this worrying about the future, this worrying about the past; it does not alter a single thing. It makes you less able to deal

with the emergency when it comes. It is a crazy thing to do; we say we cannot help it, we are built that way. It is your business to control your mind. You can mould your character, you can take it bit by bit and put it right. You can control your mind and say: "I will not worry." When these worrying thoughts come in, get up and do something. You may be strong enough to put aside the thought and replace it by another. If you can replace it by a thought of the Master, that is the finest way of all; but some people cannot do that. Then I would say to you, get up and do something physical; weed the garden, go for a bicycle ride, or learn a foreign language,—you must deal with the thing like that. This business of worrying is one of the worst things possible. Root it out. I know it is hard work. It is a sort of cherished pet sin that clings to you, but you will find you are better without it. The thing can be done. You must not have an overstrained conscience, and you *must* use your common-sense. You find yourself falling into faults and failings now and then. What of it? If you had no faults and failings you would be an Adept. Therefore, while it is quite wrong to be careless about these things and to think they do not matter, it is also equally wrong on the other side to worry unnecessarily about them and magnify them. Take note of them and do not do that particular thing again,—that is the best you can do. Use your common-sense

all the way through. The Master then goes on to say:

> The calm mind means also courage, so that you may face without fear the trials and difficulties of the Path.

You often hear of the necessity of courage in our work, and I think some people do not quite see why we need any special courage. If you try to carry out the teaching as given in these books, you will find that you need plenty of fortitude and determination. After all, those are only forms of courage; but as far as actual courage goes, you need that too. You all meditate. Your meditation, you know, is, among other things, an endeavour to bring the higher worlds nearer to you. As a rule nothing seems to surprise the average student so much as to succeed in these efforts. He has been trying for years; yet the moment he gets anything, he is usually frightened. For example, he feels himself leaving his body and struggles madly to get back again. This kind of thing is not peculiar to ourselves. I know an Occult Society in England which tried for many weeks, by means of various invocations, to raise certain kinds of spooks, and at last they did raise something. But nobody stayed to see what it was! I think a few of our members are a little that way too. They try for results on higher planes, and the moment they get them they are afraid. You see, we have to do with some things which are quite unusual and out of the common. I suppose the first time you go out of your body in

waking consciousness it does seem a little strange; you have a passing wonder whether you will get back again or not. You should realise that it does not much matter whether you do or not. Go ahead, even though it does need a certain amount of courage. We shall find also as we go further on, that courage—actual courage, not any other form of it, but plain straightforward bravery—is a thing which is very much needed. You will find that you will have to encounter forces of all sorts, which are not child's play at all. It is true you have behind you the greater force of your Master, the force of the Eternal Self. People forget that sometimes. Courage is very largely a question of your realisation of your unity with the Self. If you know that, if you are sure you are one with the Divine, then you fear nothing; but sometimes, when sudden danger arises, men forget that and shrink back. Learn not to do that. Learn that courage, plain straightforward bravery, is one of the things very much needed in this work; therefore cultivate it within yourself. Your meditation is the very thing to help you to do this, because it ought to help you to realise your unity with the One Self. And all that I said just now about our strength of will is true about our courage. All our strength and courage are in proportion to our realisation of our oneness with that true Inner Self.

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XVI

April 20, 1915.

WE were speaking, last time, of Courage.

You will find that much stress is laid on the necessity of the qualification of courage in all systems of occult training; and it is very true that courage is really necessary, courage of several kinds. If a man enters upon the Path, he will have to face a vast amount of misrepresentation, of calumny, and of misunderstanding. That has always been the lot of those who have tried to raise themselves above their fellows. So a certain amount of courage is necessary to meet that, the moral courage that will enable a man to maintain his position and to do what he thinks right, whatever other people may think or say, whatever may be the attitude adopted towards him by those around him. Besides that, the more ordinary physical courage is very distinctly required in the process of this unfolding of the higher faculties. You may perhaps be aware (it ought to be in the experience of many of you—it is within that of some, I think) that, as you advance, new regions of consciousness unfold within you. It is, of course only the one consciousness really, that of the Monad, the Divine Life, within you. But you will have to

encounter its manifestations through new vehicles and in altogether new ways, and the experiences connected with such manifestations will in some cases be distinctly alarming to the unaccustomed lower consciousness. You are used to certain limitations; and when these limitations suddenly drop away from you, you are quite likely to feel that you have no certain base left to stand upon. You feel yourself outside of time and space. There is a wonderful exhilaration connected with that, but of course there is also the feeling of novelty; there is a lack of all that you have been accustomed to depend upon, and I have known many people to be very seriously alarmed by the success of their efforts. As I told you last time, you go on with your various forms of meditation, with the intention that they should produce certain results; and yet many of you are very much surprised and alarmed when the results follow. The most natural thing in the world is that they should follow, but people seem to expect anything but that, because for years they have been working away and no very decided result has been produced. They forget that all these efforts are producing a cumulative effect and that it is perfectly natural that quite suddenly one day they should succeed. You must be prepared to face such success with equanimity, and not allow yourselves in any way to be shaken. So courage, ordinary courage, is a requisite.

There are also many dangers and difficulties on the Path, not by any means symbolical—not by any means altogether on higher planes—tests of courage and endurance that come to us in the course of our progress, for which we must be prepared. A man who is faint-hearted will never make progress. On this Path strength is required, not merely goodness, remember, but spiritual power, quite definitely strength of character, strength that cannot be shaken by the unaccustomed or the alarming. One must learn not to be alarmed or disturbed. So you may take the necessity of simple courage as a perfectly literal thing, quite apart from the equally necessary acquirement of moral courage.

You will remember that a good deal is said about that in the Hindu Scriptures. There is a celebrated passage: "What fear, what delusion is there, for one who has seen the Self?" Of course, if you can realise that you are that Self, and that you are not the outer vehicles, then you will have no fear, because it is those outer vehicles alone that can be hurt. The Self within is of course utterly unaffected, utterly uninjured by any of these passing things. So your freedom from fear will be conditioned by the extent to which you realise that Self within you. And so all the differences of power between men are really differences in degrees of this realisation, because it is in itself all power, the power of God Himself. So, if you ever do feel fear of any sort, the thing to do is

to call up more power from within, not to appeal for help from some one from without—which is the usual instinct. That is the unfortunate result of the Christian teaching on that subject. You are taught always to take refuge in prayer, and prayer literally does mean asking; consequently it should not be applied to the higher forms of aspiration as it often is. The word "prayer" comes from the Latin *precari*. It means "to ask," and nothing but that; and you do not ask for help from without but you call up reserve of strength from within. "For ye are Gods, and the children of the Most High." I know that many of our members have the habit of calling upon the Master for help when they feel in difficulty. Be very sure that the Master's thought is always very near you and assuredly He can be reached; and yet why should you trouble Him for something that you can do for yourselves? It is true that you may call upon Him, if you wish to do so. But surely if you can call upon the God within you and bring out more of that, you will bring yourself nearer to the Master Himself in doing that, than you would do in calling on Him for help. You have the right to do so—one does not question that—but knowing, as I know, how full a life is that of the Master, how He is always occupied in work for the world, surely we shall not wish to call upon Him, while there is any possible resource left to us, while we can by any means do the thing ourselves. To fail in doing this

is to fail in faith—a want of confidence, not in ourselves only, but in the Divine powers. We do not need to call upon even the help of the Master, although that is there and is ever ready. We need only call up our own reserves of strength, and that will develop our character and assist in our progress far more than invoking help from outside. We should be able to do that.

Your meditation is supposed to be developing this inner power, to be bringing it out more and more into manifestation. I do not mean developing the power itself, but developing your capacity to manifest it, so that more and more of it can shine forth through you. Therefore your meditation ought to prepare you to meet any emergency much better than those who have not yet reached this point. You know how people in the outer world are absolutely overthrown and upset by some sudden emergency. That should never happen to any member of the Theosophical Society. We should remain calm and composed whatever may come, realising that to do so is a necessary condition of real progress, because you must remember that the shock and upset which come from an hysterical outburst take a long time to recover from. Even the ordinary little annoyances of life leave their traces, often for a day or two days, in the astral body of the average man. Therefore, with your vehicles already somewhat refined, already somewhat more sensitive, you may

be sure that if you allow yourselves to be overwhelmed, or your balance to be shaken, by any emergency that arises, you will bear the scars of that for some considerable time afterwards. Assuredly all these disturbances will prevent the free passage of Divine Grace from on high. The Divine power can only pour fully and clearly and effectively through you, when all those currents are in harmony; and so, you see, it behoves us to be very careful. We do need courage and calmness, this calm mind of which He speaks.

The adventuring into unknown realms of consciousness might very well strike even the strongest with fear, if they were not certain of the power of that Self from behind. Once you are certain of this, you rest calmly in the centre, whatever may be happening at the circumference.

> It means also steadiness, so that you may make light of the troubles which come into every one's life, and avoid the incessant worry over little things in which many people spend most of their time.

I spoke to you about that I remember—of the fact that the astral body of the ordinary person is always to be seen marked with a quantity of tiny vortices, each being the scar of some little worry which has troubled him. If it is troubling him, it is a very strong and very much agitated vortex; if it is only a passing worry, it leaves its mark for some forty-eight hours or so. Consequently the whole of

the man's astral body is indurated with these little scars. They are like warts on the physical body. They prevent altogether the inflow of higher forces. Any person with clairvoyant vision can see this. That ought not to be possible for a member of the Society. Unfortunately we very often see traces of the worry still remaining. Remember that the thing is an absolute bar to anything like proper progress. You sit down in that condition and try to bring yourself into the state of mind for meditation. You cannot do it. You must straighten out all that before you are fit to meditate, and by the time most people have dropped one worry, they have taken up ten others to take its place; and so they are never in a state of calm, and cannot hope to meditate with any prospect of success. If you wish to succeed in any of these things, calmness is really a prerequisite; and, mind, not a sort of enforced calmness but a real, thorough calmness. You say, palpitating all the time; " I will be calm." It is a noble effort, but it cannot in the nature of things be a successful one. Suddenly to try to impose calmness on an astral body or a mental body in that condition is like trying to press down with a board the waves of the sea during a storm. The thing cannot be done. You must get those vibrations to slow down, to move rhythmically together, and then you will have a real, permanent calm. Then you can undertake all these other practices with some reasonable chance of

success. People do not understand the necessity of getting themselves into a state of perfect calm, and then of not allowing themselves to be disturbed by whatever happens. This steadiness is very rare.

You remember how an apostle advised you not to be blown about by every wind of doctrine. Some of our members are likely to be blown about by any rumour that comes along. You know that periodically troubles come over our Society; I have seen a good many of them in my time. I remember very well the excitement over the Coulomb business in 1884, in Madame Blavatsky's life-time, and how many people were very greatly worried and disturbed over that, and their faith in Theosophy quite lost to them, because they supposed that Madame Blavatsky had been playing tricks upon them. That, if you will observe, had nothing to do with the case. Our faith in Theosophy does not rest upon the statements of Madame Blavatsky, or upon the statement of anyone else. It rests upon the fact that it is a perfect and satisfactory system which explains more difficulties and solves more problems than any other system which has been given to us, and that remains true, even if it had been the case that Madame Blavatsky had played tricks. It was not true, of course, that our Founder had made all sorts of mistakes and had done things she should not have done. But supposing it were all true, and I know that those things were not so, but if they had been, it would not have

altered the truth of the Theosophical teaching. People rest their belief on some personal ground, and then of course that belief can be very easily shaken. If you try to understand the principles, and if you base your belief on the principles, that belief remains; if you suddenly found that Madame Blavatsky had deceived you on some point, you would say "I am sorry," but it could not possibly affect your belief in Theosophy, which has nothing to do with the question. But people do not always reason about these things, and so a lack of steadiness is very often something which we have to deplore.

Then I remember the Judge trouble, which caused a great deal of excitement, quite unnecessarily. Then, later on, there were troubles in connection with myself, troubles also with the secession of Dr. Steiner and the German Section. That at least I suppose you can now understand, since you can see the line which Germany and German thought have taken all over the world. You can see that was part of the movement to make Germany supreme in the world. Dr. Steiner was to be President, but the Society did not want that. We can see now, far more clearly than at the time, what lay at the back of that movement. That created a good deal of disturbance at the time, but it all passed, and you see in spite of all these shakings and disturbances, Theosophical truth remains the same, and the wise members are absolutely unaffected by all these things. They go on with their

studies, they continue their meditation and their reading, and they let those who like to do so worry about these other matters. The people who are excited in such cases are always worrying about what the public will think or say. It does not seem to dawn on them that it does not matter one iota what the public say or think. We are discussing Theosophical subjects. First of all, since the public knows nothing about them, the opinion of the public is not based on study of any sort. It is incapable of study; it forms its ideas from wild prejudices and impressions. Why should we trouble about it ? The opinion of a thousand men upon a subject is of no importance whatever, if none of them knows anything about it. That is absolutely true. The multiplication of ignorance does not make knowledge, but most people think it does. They think that if they can only get enough people to shout a false battle-cry, it will ultimately prevail. The opinion of one man who knows something about a subject is worth many thousands of those who do not know. We are not, I suppose, formulating our religious and philosophic ideas to please other people. We are formulating such a system as we find satisfactory, as we find will work in practice. We shall be glad to try to help any of those who wish to learn. Meantime they must think what they will; that is their affair, not ours. And so, as He says, you must make light of the troubles which come into everyone's life, and avoid the

incessant worry over the little things in which many people spend most of their time. It is worry which wears people out, it is not work.

> The Master teaches that it does not matter in the least what happens to a man from the outside: sorrows, troubles, sicknesses, losses—all these must be as nothing to him, and must not be allowed to affect the calmness of his mind.

Very few people realise that, but of course it is true. They turn them over and over in their minds and worry about them. If you have been on board a steamer in rough weather you realise that. When the screw comes out of the water and races madly in the air, if you know anything about mechanics, you know that is likely to do far more harm to the machinery than any amount of tear and wear. That is what you are doing when you worry. You are letting the machinery race. It is not doing its proper work, but it is just running away and wasting. Therefore, if possible, do not do it.

He says that all these things which come from outside are the result of past actions, and when they come you must bear them cheerfully.

> They are the result of past actions, and when they come you must bear them cheerfully, remembering that all evil is transitory, and that your duty is to remain always joyous and serene. They belong to your previous lives, not to this; you cannot alter them, so it is useless to trouble about them.

That is the plainest common-sense, but how few people are willing to accept that and live accordingly.

You cannot help these troubles that come from without, but you can meet them rightly, just as, of course, you can meet them wrongly; and to let them upset you and deflect you from your course is to take them wrongly. Take them philosophically and see what you can make out of each one of them, for your own advancement or for the help of others. That is the right way to take them. Troubles and sorrows will come to each one of you, as they do to everybody. That is your karma; and if you bear them philosophically, if you try to develop your character by their means, then you will make a present good out of that long past evil. You have to work the thing out, it is a part of a debt. If you look at it in that light, "I am clearing off so much of my karma," and if, at the same time, by bearing it philosophically and nobly, you can develop high qualities of determination, strength and endurance in yourself, then you will be turning the old evil into good. That is the proper way to take the thing, and in that way you very much minimise the suffering. You cannot of course alter the amount of the debt to be paid. The karma which comes to you calls for a certain amount of suffering, on your part, but you can apply new force and very greatly modify the effect of the blow. You can change what would be the effect of a direct blow, by an effort of your own, into one that glances off, as it were. Therefore you feel it very much less. And remember that every such putting

forth of strength is the introduction of a new force into the matter, and that therefore there is no sort of injustice done. That force, which you would otherwise have spent in some other way, you spend in neutralising the blow. You can neutralise it, you can meet it and greatly lessen it, but in doing so you expend a certain amount of your own force. You have, of course, a perfect right to do that. Karma is inevitable. Every force set in motion must discharge itself, but that in no way implies that you cannot modify its action. Of course you can, by introducing a new force. Therefore the man who knows remains calm and happy even in the midst of trouble that would be very serious to other people. The man who does not know is very often crushed, not so much by the trouble itself as by his own attitude with regard to it. There is a vast deal of imagination at the back of our sufferings. The real amount of payment exacted by karma is often small, the suffering is often very great. You may be quite sure the payment of your ancient debt requires the minimum of suffering that can be made out of any thing that happens to you. If you add to it by taking it wrongly by your own foolishness, it is true that you may redouble the suffering, multiply it by ten, but it is not fair to charge that on your ancient karma which is merely the result of your foolish action now. You see, all evil is necessarily transitory. You remember the story of the Persian King who took as

his motto, "Even this will pass away." It is a good motto, because it applies equally to pleasure or to suffering. It applies to good or evil fortune alike, whichever may be predominant at the time. Even this will pass away; however bad it is, things will grow better; in however splendid a condition of physical happiness and pleasure you may be in at a given time, that will also pass away. The only thing that does not pass is the real progress and the bliss which comes from within. That does not pass; that remains for ever. That is why you will remain always joyous and serene, knowing that your troubles will leave you, knowing also that all these things have happened often before. Whatever is your suffering, you have had suffering before in other lives. You have passed through it. If you can realise this, it helps very much. You know that there was a warning given to you, in one of the Instructions, about casting dross into the crucible of discipleship. It is an important thing for us to remember. I think that there are a great many things which the man of the world does constantly, and may do without much harm, which yet would be very decidedly wrong for us to do. Those of us who are disciples of the Master need the very greatest care. For remember that everything that comes into our consciousness is in the consciousness of the Master as well. Whatever happens to us happens to Him, because He has made us part of Him. Now, that is not true to the same extent of all

members of the Society, but remember that there is a certain sense in which it is true. I know the brotherhood of humanity, I know the true unity of everything, yes, but inside that great unity there are other still closer unities, just as inside that great brotherhood on the physical plane there is the closer tie of the relationship of families. There is the tie first of all of nationality, then within that there is the tie of family. You may be one with all mankind, but you are assuredly closer to your own nation than to others, you are closer to your own family than to the rest of the nation. So inside the great spiritual brotherhood there are also smaller and closer brotherhoods, and here you have one of them. You are members of one body, you should be like fingers on one hand. Whatever affects one does affect the rest; therefore, still less than other men, can you live to yourselves. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself"; and remember that in that closer relationship we are drawn to the feet of our Great Masters and therefore we must be doubly careful. Things that would pass with little notice in the case of people in the outer world are very serious matters for us. The outer man lets himself give way to his irritability; he falls into all sorts of little temporary rages and passions. Well, he injures himself and those around him to a certain extent, but if you, who are so much closer together, do that, you do seriously affect your fellow-members. You

send a wave of disturbance up to the feet of the Masters Themselves; therefore it is much more serious than it would be for those who have not got your advantages. Most serious of all is it for the disciple; therefore that is why we have the warning about casting dross into the crucible of discipleship. It applies to all of you though in a somewhat lesser degree. You see, anything whatever which casts difficulties in the way of your fellow-students is a thing which makes very serious karma for you. Many of these things about which we trouble ourselves are very trifling you know. In years to come, when you look back upon them, you will say: "Dear me, those things were not of any importance; I wonder why I worried so much about them." Things which troubled you in the past are now quite unimportant, but when the same things, or exactly similar things, come to you now, you do not see it and require the perspective of years. The wise man learns lessons from this looking back. He says: "Here are these things which are worrying me now. Surely they are just as unimportant as those other things in the past." Really of course they are, but it takes a wise man to make that deduction. Then He says:

> Think rather of what you are doing now, which will make the events of your next life, for that you *can* alter.

Your next life will depend very largely on the karma you make in this. It is more than that,—you can alter the remaining thought of this present life,

because you know things are moving fast now. The World Teacher will come soon now; the force which is being outpoured is tremendous, it is far above the average, and because all that plays round you, to some extent you who are trying to prepare for His Coming may modify not only your next life, but the remaining part of this.

> Never allow yourself to feel sad or depressed. Depression is wrong, because it infects others and makes their lives harder, which you have no right to do. Therefore if ever it comes to you, throw it off at once.

Anybody who suffers from serious depression will shake his head, and say; " That is very good advice, if one could only take it." But when depression comes, it so seizes upon one that it cannot be thrown off. I believe that that, in many cases, is true. Merely to think that depression is wrong and that one must not yield oneself to it, is not sufficient; but there is a thought which is sufficient, and that is the very one which is put before you here. " Depression is wrong because it affects one's fellow-students and it makes their way harder for them. Whatever I feel, I am not going to show it. I am not going to allow this depression, just because it is making things harder for other people." I believe that will give the man strength when nothing else would. As for the rest, you see it speaks of making their lives harder: you know quite well that many of the unpleasant things that come to you come through the other people.

They come from yourself really, because nothing can affect you that does not come from yourself, from your own past lives, from your own karma.

You know how you suffer by other people. There is one lesson you can take from that; you can be very careful that no one else shall be hurt by you. If some one has said something or done something you think: "Well, I will pass this over. I will not do or say anything myself which in the same way will make the day harder for some one else." You can at least make a determined effort that you will not be the instrument whereby karma works itself out. Remember the remarks in the Gospel on that subject: "It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" Exactly. It is true that, if you hurt or offend anyone, you are only the instrument of his karma; but it is a very ungenerous rôle to fill. It would be very much better if that man's karma had come to him in some other way, and not through your unkindness in thought or word or deed. We must see that we do nothing which shall cause offence to a brother or put a stumbling block in his way. That we often do it because we are not sufficiently alert, perhaps is true. We must try to learn to help it, but in the meantime it should never be consciously done. We can make that resolution for ourselves. The karma may get some other instrument through which to work; let us not be the instrument, let us not do that particular work.

Let us be the instruments of the good karma in helping them and bringing them comfort; the evil karma may work itself out through other channels and not through us.

XVII

April 27, 1915.

We were at the bottom of the forty-second page, where it is said:

> In yet another way you must control your thought; you must not let it wander. Whatever you are doing, fix your thought upon it, that it may be perfectly done; do not let your mind be idle, but keep good thoughts always in the background of it, ready to come forward the moment it is free.

There are two instructions there, and at least of them it may be said that we can follow them or not all day long.

It ought to be a simple matter: "Whatever you are doing, fix your thought upon it, that it may be perfectly done." You can practise that with business or with anything whatever you may happen to be doing. If you are writing a letter, you can concentrate your mind on that letter, and see that it is what the letter of an Occultist should be. You remember what we said some time ago,—that, just as various little faults and failings which would not matter much in people who had not vowed themselves to the service of the Master yet matter a great deal with us; so also there are certain duties which are

done differently from the way in which they are ordinarily done. Any ordinary man writes his letters sometimes in a rather slipshod way. Perhaps they do not look quite as nice as they might, and he signs them nevertheless. He says what he has to say perhaps briefly and to the point, perhaps otherwise. At any rate, he says it without any special effort to see that it is well done. It appears to be quite a new light to some people that ordinary little matters like that in daily life ought to be well done. It is not the custom for people to do them well. You can see that from your own ordinary correspondence. I get a number of letters and I must say that many of those are not such as I should dream of sending out myself. A vast amount of my correspondence I should be ashamed to send out. Letters will often be faulty in expression, badly written,—often so badly written that it wastes a great deal of my time trying to decipher them; if type-written, many mistakes in the typing; if written by hand, many mistakes in that way. That appears to be the common way of doing anything, doing it just anyhow. It may not matter very much for the outsider, but you know it does matter for us. It is emphatically our duty to do whatever we do decently well. I do not mean to say that you can always spare the time to write every thing like copper-plate, or that you have always time to make a finished work of art of every letter that you write. It cannot be done in these days, but I do

say that we ought to turn out creditable productions, and that that refers to such things as these, the ordinary letters you write. They ought to be decently well done. Outside of Occultism, as a matter of common politeness to your correspondent, you should write clearly and legibly. If you write hurriedly and badly to save a few moments of your own time, you ought to remember that you are doing that, perhaps at the sacrifice of four times the amount of your correspondent's time. You have no right to do that, just because you will not take the trouble to do the thing properly.

These sound small things, but it is the small things in everyday life that make the difference. They show character and they shape character, and if you insist on yourself doing all these small things carefully and well, you will very soon develop in yourself a character which will be careful and self-controlled and accurate about all sorts of things, great as well as small, that is because you cannot sub-divide yourself. You cannot have a character that is careful in great things and careless in small things. You will inevitably forget and be careless at the wrong time. You must be careful all the time. So in writing a letter give your mind to it, and see first of all that it is well done. You will hear later on in this book, that the tasks of the ordinary everyday life must be done by the Occultist better and not worse than by other people. That is the first thing about the

letter of the Occultist, that it should be well done, carefully expressed, carefully written or typed, as the case may be. It should be a decent thing to look at, —a pleasure to the person who receives it. That is one thing.

Then there is a more occult side to it. Every letter that you send out should be a messenger. You should make it a message of the Master. It may be about business, it may not have anything to do with Theosophy, but you should charge it with good feeling, and you can do that in a moment. As you are writing your letter, you may have in your mind strong and kindly feeling. That will affect it without any further action on your part. But take a moment of time, as you sign it, to send into it a current of good feeling of some sort. If you are writing to a friend, or those whom you know well, pour your affection into it, pour into it some note of blessing. If to a brother Theosophist, pour into it a thought of the Master, so that when that man opens it, there shall rush out at him, as it were, the feeling of brotherly affection, and the thought of the higher things, the thought of the Master. This will bring back to him that higher thought which is always good for a man to cherish. So that you will see that there are at least these two things you ought to do: see that the thing is well done and suitable to its purpose, and then see that it has some soul to it. The ordinary letter is sent out without any particular

soul or intention, but charge it with a good thought of some kind. Of course, if you are sending it to some person whom you know to be in need of some particular quality, pour that quality into it. It does not, in point of fact, matter what you put in, but you should take the opportunity to put something into it. In the same way you meet a dozen people, some of you meet hundreds of people, during the day in the course of business. You may have to speak to them, in many cases to have to shake hands with them (physically a very unpleasant ceremony in a general way, not at all a nice thing to have to do—to shake hands with a quantity of people who are probably half strangers, but still that happens to be the custom of the country), and therefore you had better take advantage of it to pour in a rush of vitality, or nerve-force of affection, of the higher thought, whatever it may happen to be. You should never shake hands with anybody without leaving something of that kind behind you, because the thing is an opportunity. Our business, if we aspire to be pupils of the Master, is to watch for opportunities everywhere. We have one real object in life, and that is to do good to others. Our great idea is service. The one test, as our President herself once said,—the first, the most important test of discipleship—is usefulness. A man who is not in some way or other being useful to his fellow-man is not on the road to be accepted; you may be sure of that.

All these little daily contacts are opportunities, and the wise man will utilise them. You say they are all small things; Well, even if that be so, which I doubt, a number of small things taken together amount to a great deal. If you give a little help and a little strength a dozen times a day, the total amount of help given will amount to a very reasonable *quantum* of help. But, as a matter of fact, they are not small things by any means. With a very little practice, you may learn to give, not a small, but a very large amount of help to a person by the touch of the hand, or the writing of a letter. It is only a question of practice. The letter may become a talisman. You know how we go to work to magnetise a talisman; you can do the same thing with a letter. The man who has not learned how goes through various elaborate practices, and it takes him a long time; the man who has practised it can do it with a touch. So give that touch. It amounts to trying all the time, recollecting that everything, every action of whatever sort, is an opportunity, and ought to be taken advantage of by the one who is a student of Occultism. It makes our lives rather different from those of ordinary people. I suppose it is no injustice to the ordinary man to say that his idea in making a new acquaintance is very largely: "What shall I get out of this in some way or other?" It may not be money. It may be amusement, or social benefit, but at any rate

he thinks: "What shall I be able to make out of this situation?" Of course our attitude must be exactly the reverse: "Here is a new opportunity for me. What can I give?" If I am introduced to a new man, I look him over and throw in something or other in the shape of a good thought. It will stick there and penetrate, when its time comes. I have told you that the pupils of the Master do that when they are walking about the streets, as they are riding on the trams or ferries. They watch cases where they see a good thought is needed, and they give it, a hundred different kinds perhaps in the course of a single morning's or afternoon's journey. When you come into direct touch with anyone, then there is an opportunity for you. Do something with it, do not just let it slip by and take no notice of it.

So you see, He says, whatever you are doing fix your mind upon it. We all do a good many things to rest our minds. We read novels, we read magazines expressly to rest our minds. But doctors tell you that the best kind of rest is generally some other form of exercise, I mean for the mind or anything of that sort; and so I would suggest that, even when you are reading something for the sake of amusement, or for the sake of rest, you should yet not forget that, even in doing that, your mind is your servant, and that you are not to be its slave. If you are reading a story, fix your mind on that story and try to understand it, try to see what the author meant by it. Often people

read so vaguely that by the time they have got to the end of the story, they have forgotten the beginning. They are so utterly vague; they have just read a book and if you ask them what it is about they cannot tell you. They could not give you a sketch of the plot, or what it is meant to teach. That is not good. If we want to train our minds (and I take it you all do), then, when we are reading purely for the sake of pleasure or recreation, we ought to do that well. When you are trying to rest, then rest well. Very few people know how to rest. There are quantities of people who do not even know how to lie down and rest themselves. They do not know how to lie down, let themselves relax, and really rest. I can tell you that ten minutes of real rest and relaxation is worth a couple of hours of lying down in a tense and strained condition, as most people do. Whatever you do, even though it be rest or recreation, do it well. Know what you are doing and do it well, even though it be that, because that also is a necessary part of life. You would not be doing it at all unless you felt it desirable and necessary to make you strong to do your work. Therefore, when you are resting, rest well, and even so keep control of your mind and do not let it wander vaguely off. Whatever you are doing do it as well as you can. It is a habit like everything else, and you will presently find that you cannot do things in the old slipshod way. You will say: " I cannot let such a letter go. I must do it

decently. I cannot let my mind go wandering all over the place. I must keep it together, keep it occupied." The Master says:

> Do not let your mind be idle, but keep good thoughts always in the background of it, ready to come forward the moment it is free.

That is very fine advice. I hope that most of you are doing that. That is one of the purposes of your meditation. The fact that we set apart a certain time for meditation has, as one of its many objects, that we shall be in a state of constant meditation—that thoughts of the Master shall be always present in the background of our minds, so that they come forward when the active part of it is not occupied by other work.

Of course other people have quite other thoughts which are also good. If you have been to India, you will find people who are constantly muttering to themselves as they stand waiting for a train at the station, or walking along the road, and if you listen closely, you will sometimes find they are saying a name over and over again. Generally it is, "Rama, Rama, Rama," or "Sita Rama," the names of Sita and Rama, the perpetual repetition of these names, which, remember, to them are holy names. One of the special points which missionaries have always made against the heathen is that "they are given to vain repetitions," quoting a text. But I may say that the repetitions are by no means always

vain. They may be; a man may say things of that sort merely as a habit, and give no thought to it; but if you come to that, a Christian also may repeat his prayers, while his thoughts are wandering somewhere else all the time. A priest may go through his hours of prayer because he knows the whole thing off by heart, without necessarily concentrating much thought upon it. He may utter his Ave Marias and Paternosters without ever thinking of Our Lady. In any religion it is possible to become a formalist. In any religion it is possible to retain the outer shell, having lost most of the inner spirit; but that is not done any more in Hinduism, or in Buddhism, than it is in Christianity, and I should be inclined to say not nearly so much. It is a fact that the repetition of names like that, "Rama, Rama, Rama," does help to keep the thought of the Deity in the minds of the people; and when it does that, assuredly the thing is a good thing and not a bad one. We may look down from a lofty superiority and say that we can think of the Master, without having to repeat His Name all the time; and if you can think equally readily and equally fruitfully of Him without needing the repetition of His Name, that is a better thing. You have risen to a higher level, when you can keep the constant thought, without having to make the physical repetition of the name; but it is infinitely better to make the physical repetition than not to have the thought. So it is not well to scoff ignorantly at the

customs of other religions. The Muhammadan goes about repeating texts; he always has the name of Allah upon his lips. It may be that many times he does not think much of Him. But many times he does, and that means something to him. The greetings that he exchanges, when the name of God comes into them and His blessing is invoked, are sometimes only formal; but sometimes they are hearty good wishes, and the thought of God is really there. Therefore it is assuredly not for us to despise that. We use the same forms with much less thought, I fancy, than the despised heathen. We all of us say "Good-bye"; few people think of God at all when they are saying it. Repetitions are a sort of crutch for the untrained mind. Better to do without a crutch, but very much better to use the crutch than not to walk at all, and that is what it comes to. Just as the ignorant man perhaps needs this constant repetition to keep the thought always before him, so can we, who have advanced further, keep the thought in mind without the repetition. Only let us see that we do keep the thought before us. So all those things are efforts made by the different religions to ensure this same thing which is advised here, that a good thought should always be present in the mind.

You serve two purposes by that: first, you set up a habit, you set up a rate of vibration in your mental body. There is a certain rate appropriate to these devotional feelings. You get the mental body in the

habit of constantly vibrating at this rate, and so, in time, devotion comes easily and naturally to it, and you build devotion into your character. Another thing is that you are, to a very large extent, keeping out evil thought. If you leave the mind vacant, any passing wind of casual thought can get in and influence it, and passing thought is more likely to be bad, or at any rate useless, than useful. Just think of it. Here are many millions of people inhabiting this country or any other country you like to think of. Imagine what they are likely to be thinking about. A few among them are pious and devotional people of splendid character, but the vast majority are not that at all; they are just very ordinary people with some good qualities and some bad ones, and their thoughts are mostly self-centred and not at a very high level. Therefore the vast amount of thought floating round you is likely to represent the average level of the country. Surely you who belong to the Theosophical Society, are aiming at something higher than the average level of the country. You want to be in a position to lift your average brother, and you cannot do that until you get on to a higher level yourself first. Therefore you had better not leave your mind a blank for all these passing winds of thought to fill. The only way to avoid this is to have some good thought in your mind. Dr. Watts remarked, I believe: "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." It is quite

certain that idle minds lead to a vast amount of mischief; so have a good thought in the background of your mind, and there is no doubt that, for us, the thought of the Master, of His Presence, of His work, is the best we can have, the thought of working for Him, of doing something for Him,—and that means helping other people. If you have that thought always in the background of your mind, it comes up automatically, and you think: "What can I do? How can I help?" That is a very good thing to think about. Before I leave that, it occurs to me that you must all of you have seen examples, in yourselves, of how a thing which is in the background of your mind will put itself forward without your volition. Sometimes, for example, you hear a catching tune over and over again all day long. It keeps coming back to you. You will find yourself humming that tune. That is an instance in which the mind recurs to anything in which it happens to be interested. Make it interested in the right things, and those will recur to it in just the same way.

Going on to the next paragraph, He says:

> Use your thought-power every day for good purposes; be a force in the direction of evolution.

That is very good advice indeed. Be a force. A most necessary thing for people to remember. We have been educated on a sort of namby-pamby theory that the one thing necessary is to be good. That is very much the Christian theory: "Be good, be a

saint." If only Christians would read (they never do) the early Fathers of the Church, they would arrive at a different theory on this point. You may remember, as I have already pointed out, that S. Clement of Alexandria, who was in many ways, perhaps, the greatest of them, said, "Purity is only a negative condition and is valuable chiefly as a condition of insight." The chief use of being pure is that unless you are you cannot see clearly. The thing itself is merely negative, and so the attainment of that condition of purification was the first stage of the old Christian development. Now it is not only the first but the last. The great idea of the Christian is to produce a saint, a pure, good person. That was not at all the idea of the early Christian Church. They realised that you want a great spiritual power, you want *somebody who can do something*. Of course he must be good; that is a prerequisite, because he cannot learn to be useful unless he is first good himself. But the being good in itself is only a condition, an abstaining from evil, necessary for your after-progress. It is not the end of everything. When the man had gained that, at any rate, in the early Christian Church, they considered him fit for the next stage which was Illumination; and then came, later on, Sanctification and Perfection. But first, of course, he must be "pure". That was nothing to boast of, everybody was supposed to be pure, they all ought to have reached that stage. And so

with us you must not think it enough to be pious, and to abstain from doing evil things. Of course you must be that; it is the beginning of everything. But when you have got yourself into that state, then go ahead and do something with it. Be a force in the direction of evolution. Do not sit down and purr because you feel good. Do something. I do not mean for the sake of showing off, but do something to justify your existence. What are you on earth for, after all? Why should you cumber the ground, unless you can do something? To sit there and be good (it is better than sitting there and being bad) is simply a negative state. Get up and do something to justify your existence. You are there to be a channel for the Divine force. You, the Monad, came forth from Him long ago, as a glowing spark of the Divine Fire. Truly, as *The Secret Doctrine* says, "The spark burns low," very low in very many cases. Blow the thing up again with the fervour of your enthusiasm, and your faith, and your love, and make that spark into a living flame, which will warm other people and will do some good. Be a force in the direction of evolution. We are all too apt, you know, to sit down and be satisfied or dissatisfied as the case may be. As long as you are thinking about yourself, you are not on the right path at all. Think not of what you are, but of what you can do to help. You will come right, in regard to your self-culture, when you realise the necessity of work for

others. I often think that, if people would think less of their own development and more of what they can do for others, they would get better results. To be everlastingly pulling yourself up by the roots to see how you are growing is not conducive to growth at all. Carry out, as far as you at present can, the work which you are growing up to do, and that will help you forward more than anything else can do. This is one way in which you can be a force. It is not mere meditation, but active help.

He says:

> Think each day of some one whom you know to be in sorrow, or suffering, or in need of help, and pour out loving thought upon him.

I dare say that you all do know somebody in sorrow and suffering. You must know many such among your friends, who could be greatly helped by the stream of thought which you can send them. But if you do not happen for the moment to know of a case of anyone who is in sorrow and suffering, you all know a great many people who are in need of help. You know for example our President, who is always spending herself in pouring out her thought-power over the members of the Society, and on many others. You would never waste your time if you sent a thought of devotion and of strength to her. Give her a little more to pour out. You may be very sure she will not keep it for herself; she will pour it out again on others. I wish

you could be made to see all these things in action, just for once, as a clairvoyant sees them. Your thought-force is just as definite a thing as the water you pour out of a jug into a glass, and if you send it with a definite stream to anybody, say to our President, then you may be as absolutely certain that it will get there, as you would be if you poured the water into a glass. You cannot see that stream going to her, but it goes; and if you send it as a thought of love, a thought of devotion, a thought of helpfulness, it is as much a definite amount of force as the water poured into the tumbler. She may not know from whom it comes, but she seizes the force and uses it again—you may be very sure of that.

The same with our Masters. You pour out a thought of devotion to Them. That is very good for you. It arouses devotion in you, and it calls down on you the answering thought of the Master, which is in the nature of a blessing, of the nature of Divine Grace poured out upon you. Besides that you add a little to the Master's store of force, and He uses that for the good of others. Therefore, do remember that these thoughts are real, and that according to the strength of your thought will be the amount of force which you will contribute for that good purpose; and just as surely as a shilling that you send to the Fund of the President is well spent by her in connection with the work, so surely every thought sent to her is a force which she will and can use. Therefore you,

at any rate, need never be at a loss for an object to which you can send your thought. If you yourself know of cases, within your immediate circle, which need help, it is better that you should attend to them; but if you at any time do not know of such a case, send your thoughts to the President and she will use them. If you know of a case where your money will be well spent, you should relieve that case. But if you do not know of any such, forward it to some one who does know and he will use it. Both cases are precisely the same. You must realise that the thought-form is as real a thing as the money—in every way as real a thing.

By doing this, you close your mind to undesirable thoughts, and you keep the thought of the Master always before you, and that will strengthen all other thoughts. It will attune itself to all other thoughts, and make them more real. If you try to look at things as the Master would look at them, if you think of other subjects with the thought of the Master in your mind, then your thought will be much clearer and more definite, and in every way worth much more than it would be otherwise.

Then He goes on to another special form of thought; He says:

> Hold back your mind from pride, for pride comes only from ignorance.

That is necessary advice. You may think, "I should not be likely to be proud." It has never

occurred to you that you might be proud, but you know that there is a great deal of subtle pride amongst students of Occultism. They know, because they cannot help knowing, that they are thinking not quite as other men are thinking; that they know a little more of the real facts of life than do people who have not studied these things. Well and good. One does not mind their recognising that fact. It would be foolish not to recognise it. But let them take care lest they should have a feeling of pride in consequence of that, a feeling of despising the ordinary man who does not know these things as yet. In this particular you are in front of the ordinary man, but it is a truism to say that there may quite well be other matters and other lines, along which the ordinary man is far ahead of you. We see that it is so in everyday life. You may know a great deal of Theosophy. Here is somebody who knows a great deal more than you of science, of music or of art. You would think "Yes, but Theosophy is much more important than these things." So it is, and the one advantage that we have is that our minds have been opened to the fact; but remember that the man who knows science or music or art thoroughly has spent very much more time and trouble in learning that than you have spent in learning Theosophy, and surely he deserves credit for the work he has done, for the amount of selfless labour he has put into that. It is not the mark of a wise man, (and the Theosophist,

since he studies Divine Wisdom, at least ought to try to be wise,) to despise the work of another. He will realise that all alike are progressing. Remember, too, the warning so specially given to you in *Light on the Path.* Do not begin too soon to think that you are different from other people, because the difference is very slight; and when we come to look at it closely, the balance sometimes tips down on the other person's side. We are not at all great saints yet. Some day we shall be; but so one day will the ordinary man be. So hold your mind free from pride, for pride, the Master says, comes always from ignorance. Well, so it does. The more you know, the less likely are you to be proud of it; more especially when it is your good fortune to come into touch with one of our Great Masters, you will never feel proud again, not even proud of the fact—because, whenever you think that you can do anything, or that you possess any quality, it cannot but come into your mind, "But I have seen that quality in the Master, and what is mine beside His?" They stand so high, you see. The virtues in Them are so transcendent, are so magnificently developed, that to know One of Them is an absolute cure for anything like pride, an instantaneous cure for it. But there is one remarkable fact about that. In ordinary life, when you think that you can do a little bit of something, and you come into the presence of an expert in that line, you see how little you can do

compared with such an expert, and you feel rather crushed and hopeless. But that is not the feeling you get in the presence of a Master. You realise your own incompetence and insignificance acutely, but also you realise your own potentiality. So that, although He stands so far above you in all ways, the sight of this encourages you to try to imitate Him, instead of feeling that there is an abysmal gulf which you can never pass. You feel: "I can do this, I am going to set myself to imitate Him." That is the feeling, the stimulus, which any touch with the Master always gives you. You feel, in His Presence, very much what the Apostle said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Because of this strength of the Master you think at the time: "I shall never again fall into the faults of irritability and so on, which I committed yesterday. I look back and see that some things worried me. How ridiculous! Why should anything ever worry me?" That is the sort of feeling you get, and of course you say: "I will never again yield myself to these feeble things." It may be that you do yield yourself later, because you forget for a minute that Divine Influence. You have passed out of its immediate direct ray, and perhaps you forget that it can reach you just as well when the rays are not to your sight visible and direct, and that you may live always in that aura if you choose to do so. Of course, if you could remember that, you would never

fall into any of these minor mistakes which we so often make; but being human we still make mistakes. When you have reached a stage when you can make them no more, you will be very near to Adeptship. Of course that is the impression produced. You see the gulf between you, but the very fact of all that splendour is an encouragement to you, and not a deterrent. It is a very remarkable feeling and very intense, very wonderful and very beautiful. Surely there could be no pride in your mind under those conditions.

He says:

> The man who does not know thinks that he is great, that he has done this or that great thing; the wise man knows that only God is great, that all good work is done by God alone.

That is a very interesting thought. When you do something very great, very wonderful, and you think, "That is good, I have done that," it is very good to do as did the mediæval Christians, and say: "To God be the glory," because, you know, there is only One Person in the whole of this solar system. There is one Actor, and that is the God of the System. All that you do, He does through you. We are all manifestations of His power. I know quite well that it is difficult, that it is practically impossible for us to realise that thing, but the more we develop the higher consciousness, the more we succeed in raising it to higher levels, the more acutely we shall feel that.

You say: "I am that Self, that Self am I." It is better to say it, if you do not feel it, than not to say it at all, for really to feel that thing once is worth all the repetitions. Sometimes perhaps, in meditation, in moments of high exaltation, you will realise that unity. You may look up as though from the bottom of a well and see the stars shining above you, and you can realise then, just for a moment, how utterly what you had thought of as your intellect, or your power to love, or your devotion, are not you at all, but He, that they are His, that all these are facets of His glory, and that the only real progress for you is to make yourself more and more a channel for His power, and more and more to realise that it is He that works through you. You remember how Jesus Himself said, when called "Good Master": "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but One, that is, God." God is in every one, and whatever goodness there is in anyone is the God in him shining through. So let us try as far as may be to realise that those words which we repeat so often, "I am that Self, that Self am I," are not mere forms, but have a meaning. They are, I was going to say, the only really true words that we can ever utter. They represent the truth more highly than anything else we can say. "I am that Self." Let it sink deeply into you. "I am that Self, that Self am I."

XVIII

May 4, 1915.

2. Self-control in Action.

The Master says:

> If your thought is what it should be, you will have little trouble with your action. Yet remember that, to be useful to mankind, thought must result in action. There must be no laziness, but constant activity in good work.

Of course it is a truism to say that thought always precedes action. Of course there are occasions on which we act, as we say, without thinking, but even these are cases in which there has been previous thought, in which we have a habit of thought on certain subjects or along a certain line, and we act instinctively in agreement with that. A man does a thing and says: "Well, I could not help doing it. I did not think." But the fact is that it is the carrying out of thought generated, perhaps, in previous incarnations. Of course a man has not the same mental body as in his previous life. No, but he has the same mental unit, which is the nucleus of the mind-body and to a great extent a kind of epitome of it. That does bear from life to life the impression of the

type of thought to which the man has been accustomed, and it is only by modifying that, along with the rest of the mental body, that a man can change his habits of thought.

You have often been told that a man can take over from life to life in his causal body only his good qualities. That is true; the causal body is constructed of the matter of the three higher sub-planes of the mental plane, the first, second and third, and matter of these sub-planes cannot vibrate in response to any of the lower or less desirable qualities. Therefore the man can only build into himself the good; which is very fortunate for us, because otherwise we should all have built in a great deal that is not good, and the result of that would wreck our evolution instead of helping it. But each time he does carry over with him the permanent atoms belonging to the different planes, the permanent unit and atoms for the mental, astral, and physical planes, and those are really epitomes of the bodies which gather round them each life. And so, although the man cannot actually carry over with him an evil quality, he can carry over the vibrations which belong to it, and these will come up as inherent qualities in his new vehicles. He can deal with them as soon as he is strong enough to understand that he ought to do so; and even before he understands that in his new vehicles, the parents and friends can do very much to help the Ego by encouraging the good

qualities which manifest in those lower vehicles and, of course, by discouraging the bad ones. That is the great thing always, to get the good qualities into action, and make them into habits before the bad ones can assert themselves. The bad ones will sooner or later manifest themselves, probably, because the outer world will stir them up, but if you already have a strong momentum in favour of good qualities, then the evil ones will find it very difficult to make any impression. You have the whole will of the ego acting through his vehicles against their impacts, and so they will make but very little show, and will be probably weeded out in the course of that incarnation, so that in the following incarnation the ego will come in without any trace of these qualities.

Still one does bring over those possibilities of a quality, rather than actual qualities. Madame Blavatsky used to call these, among other things, " Privation of matter," *i.e.*, forces which would operate when the matter was there for them to work in, but meantime they were suspended until that matter existed, until it gathered round the ego again. So when a man acts, as we say, without thinking, he acts according to the momentum of those old thoughts which perhaps belong to lives long past. They do not belong necessarily, of course, to the very last incarnation. All his previous incarnations act upon him. This is one of the greatest reasons why we should guard our thoughts, because we may never

know when those thoughts will overflow into action. The man who yields himself to some evil thought, thinking he cannot help it and that he will never allow himself to put that thought into action, might find it translated into action before he was aware of it.

Then the Master says:

> Yet remember that, to be useful to mankind, thought must result in action.

That is obvious. There are three aspects of the Logos, Will, Wisdom, and Activity, and those three are symbolised in man by Atma, Buddhi, and Manas, and Manas corresponds to Activity. There must be activity associated with thought, and thought must embody itself in action. The Master Morya once said that thought not acted upon was like a cancer in the mind. That is a very interesting idea. As a matter of fact, you can see that a large number of people, although they are very good people, remain in about the same position. They seem to be marking time in regard to their progress, and very many times, if one searches for the cause of that, one will find the cause to lie in their good resolutions. Their good resolutions ought to help them along; and so they would, if they were carried out. When people remain satisfied with them as resolutions and go no further, they simply act as barriers. They rest satisfied with that and make no effort. Of course we who are Theosophists ought not to be satisfied

with standing still. We ought to be steadily moving forward; and when these good impulses rise within us, we ought to use them. To leave them unfruitful is really to fall back. They become hindrances.

Then He says—and this is an important point too:

> But it must be your *own* duty that you do—not another man's, unless with his permission and by way of helping him. Leave every man to do his own work in his own way; be always ready to offer help where it is needed, but never interfere. For many people the most difficult thing in the world is to mind their own business; but that is exactly what you must do.

Well, you see that is put fairly strongly, and assuredly it is very much needed. There must be no interference. You see the most active men are precisely those who, because of that activity, want to have a finger in every pie. They want to have a share in everything, and they feel that they could do every man's work better than he does it. Now it is just possible that they really could do so. It does not follow by any manner of means; but supposing that they really could, even then it would not be helping a man for them to interfere with his work. They must give him his chance, and let him do the thing in his own way. There is a remark in the *Bhagavad-Gita* to the effect that the duty of another is full of danger. One reason for that is that each person's action is the logical outcome of his thought-activity. It has the man behind it, it has the force of his virtues, yes, and the

force of his vices, if he happens to have any, but it is his individual way of looking at the thing that induces him to approach it in that way, and to do just what he does with it. Now your line of thought-activity may be very much superior to his, or it may not; but do not mix yours with his. When the job comes into your hands do it according to your lights, but do not interfere with the other man's, because he has his point of view; and, difficult as it may be for you to understand it, there may be a great deal to be said for his point of view,—a very great deal. He may see things which do not occur to you. The great thing to understand about it is that it is not your business to set everybody right according to your ideas, even when you are quite sure of it. You see the other man's way may be the best for him at his stage, and, at any rate, remember that it has the force of his habits of thought behind it, and you cannot safely interfere with those. If you do, you are just as likely to produce a bad result as a good one. Take such a simple physical-plane matter as handwriting. When you are teaching a child to write, you teach him how he ought to hold the pen. You say the best results are produced by holding it in a particular way. (As a matter of fact very few adults hold it in that way at all, each man has his own way to which he has got used.) You may teach the child to hold his pen in what you think to be the right way; but if you take an adult who has got used to

holding it in a particular way, and then force him to hold it in another way, which you say is the right way, the writing will be worse and not better (and after all what you want is good writing). You thereby take away from him all the value of the long practice which he has had. That is equally true with a number of other things. If you try to make a man do things in your own way, when all the force of his nature indicates that he should do it in another way, they will be worse done and not better, and he will lose the advantage of all the mighty power of habit, which is a very great help and not one to be at all despised, but to be used in the right direction.

Never interfere, He says most strongly. These are the Master's own words, and perhaps we should remember that one may interfere by thought as well as by word or by action. If you are suspicious of a man, if you are crediting him with evil motives for what he does, you are interfering with him on the mental plane and that also you have no right to do. Suspicion is always wrong, whether it be justified or not justified; it is always interference, and it is a thing which we should avoid. The effect of it is to send out quite a definite force on to the mental plane, and to give the person what corresponds to a little push, and this might just push him over the border line, it might just disturb the balance of his mind and make him do something which otherwise he might not have done. It is a most evil thing to suspect people,

to credit them with evil motives. You must always think the best of people. So often we assign motives to them when we see them doing something, but nearly always we are wrong. We say: "It is obvious that he does it because of this or that." Each man knows his own work and his own way, and if you could see into the mind of that man, you would generally find that he was taking into consideration facts or considerations that had never occurred to you at all,—that he was acting from motives of which you would never have suspected him.

I have found that out very strongly myself, in India. Our Indian brothers differ from us profoundly in their modes of thought. It is often incomprehensible to the European why an Indian should do a certain thing, and if—as, I am afraid, we often do instinctively—we attribute a motive, it is practically certain to be entirely wrong. I continually found that for myself in dealing with them. I did not get so far as to be able to tell from what motives they were usually acting, but at any rate I got to be quite certain that they were acting from motives which would never by any chance have occurred to me. When you have found that to be so, you realise that you had better not judge; it is always a mistake. It is an interference with their thoughts and with their business, and when you are so certain always to be wrong, it is very silly, and even wicked. You should

therefore follow the old advice, "Judge not that you be not judged," and always think the very best of people.

A good deal of constant interference with others, both in speech and in thought, is, I am afraid, due to religious misconceptions. You see, Christianity makes it its business to interfere with everybody. It starts out to save other people's souls, instead of recognising that each man's business is to let his soul save him in its own way. But most assuredly you have no right to interfere between the lower and the higher self of another under any circumstances whatever. I think that that is partly responsible for our habit of interference.

The torturers of the Inquisition thought that you might do any frightful thing with a man's body, in order to save his soul, by making the body say this or that. It was never, so far as I could understand, even suggested that you might make him believe it; but if you could make him say that he believed it, that is, if you could make the body say it believed it, then somehow or other you saved the soul. Well, if people really believed that, then they could actually justify all the horrible things they did; because, you see, to whatever horrors you subjected the unfortunate body for a few hours or days, that would be nothing if you could save the soul for all eternity. The torture of your neighbour under those circumstances would become quite a laudable action. All sorts of most

dreadful persecutions have been justified on this theory of saving somebody else's soul. We, at least, in Theosophy must free ourselves from that idea. We must always be ready to help, but at the same time we must not force our help upon people with the idea that we are thereby doing them great good. We may know better than they, but to force our ideas upon another man is always a great mistake, it is always a dangerous thing to do. We can see it surely in the way in which we ourselves are often treated. You know that outside in the world there are people who are constantly pouring out evil thought against Theosophy. They want to convert us. Their desire is to save our souls by converting us to some particularly narrow form of Christianity. We must not allow ourselves to be disturbed, we must keep quite steady and quite calm, and we must recognise that there are different ways for different people, and that all ways in the end lead to God.

Then we come again to another point of great importance:

> Because you try to take up higher work, you must not forget your ordinary duties, for until they are done you are not free for other service. You should undertake no new worldly duties; but those which you have already taken upon you, you must perfectly fulfil—all clear and reasonable duties which you yourself recognise, that is, not imaginary duties which others try to impose upon you.

> If you are to be His, you must do ordinary work better than others, not worse; because you must do that also for His sake.

New members often forget that, you know, in their first great outburst of enthusiasm; they say that the world is utterly unimportant. So it is in itself, but as a duty which comes in your way your worldly work is a thing which has to be done. There is truth in the idea that worldly things are unimportant and this is precisely the danger. There is very little danger in an open staring contradiction of facts, but a thing which you can see is half true is very much more dangerous, and it is probably the half-truth in that thought that makes it dangerous to us.

That first great outburst of enthusiasm has great advantages, but it has also dangers. and this is one of them, that we are apt to neglect the ordinary daily life. It is better to make that mistake, I suppose, than to neglect the higher altogether, but balance is best of all. Remember once more how it is said in the *Gita* that Yoga is skill in action. It is not just blundering like a bull in a china shop. It is skill in action, doing the right thing, doing it carefully, tactfully and courteously, but doing it. That is one of the reasons of the long probationary period which is often imposed, in the case of disciples of the Masters,—namely, that they may learn balance. Learn when the worldly duties may safely be put aside and when they cannot. It needs practice; only we must not forget that the very test of discipleship is usefulness to others.

He says:

> Undertake no new worldly duties.

Well, that is clear. You have pledged yourself, your time and your strength to the Master's service. Therefore you ought not to undertake some new thing which is not actually necessary, which is not actually your work ; and so again He says that the duties must be clear and reasonable duties which you yourself recognise. You must not let people force upon you duties which you know are not yours. It is just possible that there may have been there a little personal application, because the teaching was in the first place given to Alcyone and with reference to his own needs as well as to those of the pupils whom, later on, he himself would teach. Certainly in his case there was a good deal of that effort from without—I know, because I was living at Adyar at the time—to force upon him duties that were not his. Many expected him to go on carrying out all the onerous exoteric customs of the Hindu religion, some of which are so complicated as to take up many hours of time a day. I remember one thing which makes me think that this passage referred to it. In one special case where a whole day was to be devoted to some sort of ceremony in connection with some departed relation, some distant connection, I forget now who, there were features about it which we did not quite like, and which we thought did not look well ; so

the matter was submitted to the Master, and He was asked, for the sake of His pupil, whether this particular thing should be done. He said: "Yes, for the sake of the rest of the family who might be shocked or troubled, you may go down for an hour at such and such a time, but be very careful that, during that time, you repeat nothing whatever which you do not understand, that you in no case repeat things blindly after the priest and that you do not allow anything to be done for you that you can do for yourself,—that is, in the way of ceremonies and blessings and so forth." So there, quite evidently, in the best of good faith, an attempt was being made to force upon the boy a duty which was certainly not his to do. I take it that it is just possible that the special reference here may have been to that and to similar cases. Be sure that it is a real duty and not one that people are trying to impose upon you when clearly it does not belong to you. We find that so in the Hindu religion, but people even here often expect from you, as duties, things which are clearly not necessary parts of your duty. I can quite imagine, for example, that people might expect from some of our members attendance at all sorts of social functions and so on, and the members might very well say that they have not time. A member might say: "I am willing to give up a reasonable amount of time for the sake of keeping on friendly terms with people," and they will be quite justified, no doubt about that. This

may be regarded as a duty by the outsider, but you, in yourself, know that only a small part of any such things can ever be thought of as a duty at all. I suppose there are many cases of that sort. There have been others too. I have myself seen cases in our Society where people, by interfering with that which was not their duty, did a great deal of harm, not only to themselves, but to the very cause which they thought they were championing, a good deal of evil instead of good. It is always rash to blunder in upon the duty of other people and force them to do anything. The President once made a remark on exactly those lines. I remember she said: " Do your own work to the fullest extent of your ability, and leave other people's work alone to the fullest extent of your ability." You may not be able quite to repress the itch to interfere, but repress it to the extent of your ability, keep as quiet as you can. Then that last word is worthy, I think, of special attention. " If you are to be His, you must do ordinary work better than others, not worse; because you must do that also for His sake." I have known members who, in that first rush of enthusiasm, very much neglected daily work. They say: " Anything will do. I need not trouble to do this or that piece of ordinary work; I need not trouble to dress myself decently because now I have something so much bigger to think about." But you want to recommend that to the rest of the world, and you do

not do so by eccentricity. Remember that the ordinary work should be better done, not worse. We spoke sometime ago, you remember, about the work of writing a letter. I mentioned then that he who had not time to write his letters clearly was saving himself a minute or two at the cost of many minutes of the time of the unfortunate person who had to read it. Now there is a case where the man will do the ordinary work better because he has become a pupil. He learns not to think of saving his own time but of the person at the other end; therefore he does that very ordinary task better than a man who is not a pupil and who has not thus the same incentive to remember others as well as himself. So all the small ordinary things you must do better than others.

You remember how in his youth, Prince Siddartha, who afterwards became the Buddha, devoted Himself almost entirely to the higher things, to study and meditation, and took very little thought about such outer things as games and exercises. But when it came to the time of His marriage with Yasodhara it was necessary, according to the custom of the time, that He should come forth and take part in all these things, that He should prove Himself to be as good as others at riding and running and shooting and feats of strength; and His friends feared for Him because He had not had practice in such things. But He laughed lightly and said: " I shall not lose my love

for such things as these." And so He showed that He was able to do all these everyday ordinary things better than they. Well, that ought to be the case with us too. Whatever we have to do we ought to do better than others.

3. Tolerance.—Then we come to the third of these qualifications—Tolerance.

> You must feel perfect tolerance for all, and a hearty interest in the beliefs of those of another religion, just as much as in your own. For their religion is a path to the highest, just as yours is. And to help all, you must understand all.

There is a good deal of what appears to be tolerance at the present day, much more than there has been for many centuries, perhaps since the time of the great Roman Empire. But the toleran[illegible] question is, for the most part, very much like t[illegible]at [illegible] the Roman Empire. You hear curious things [illegible] the way in which the Romans treated the early Christians. As a matter of fact, clairvoyant research shows that the early Christians deserved very much of what they got. I do not mean to say that things were not very barbarous, but the early Christians seem to have been a very anarchical set of people; and when they came into collision with the authorities, it was never because of their religion, but always because of their anarchical tendencies and of the things they said and did. First of all, the greatest of the persecutions never happened at all; but it is true that the Christians

got themselves into trouble very frequently. They preached their doctrine of brotherhood, and although Rome in the best days was a republic, yet it was always a republic managed to a great extent by the oligarchy. In the days of the Emperor Nero, especially, it did not welcome the kind of brotherhood that the early Christians preached. It was far too much like "*Soyez mon frère, ou je vous tuerai*". "Be my brother or I will kill you." It was far too much that kind of thing; it was that kind of Socialism which says: "What is yours is mine, and I am going to take it," not the kind the President advocates: "What is mine is yours; you may share it"; a very different attitude. So I say those early Christians got themselves into trouble, not because of their religious beliefs, but because in some cases they would not perform small ceremonies which were considered matters of loyalty. They would not, for example, throw a pinch of incense on the altar, or pour out a drop of wine to the Emperor. That is precisely equivalent to what not taking off one's hat to the King would be to-day. Naturally people who refused to do this would be roughly handled because they would be suspected of anarchical tendencies. Such a man might try to explain that it was only due to his religious convictions, but the crowd would probably not wait to listen. The authorities said to the early Christians: "But surely you can pour out a drop of wine and throw a pinch of incense in the

name of the Emperor? It is such a small thing. Everybody does it. Why should not you?" But the man's inconvenient conscience would get in the way, and of course trouble would arise. As for their religion, the Roman Empire was the most tolerant in the world in religious matters. They had a huge Pantheon where they set up temples to all the Gods. As soon as ever they realised that the Christ was being worshipped, they promptly set up a statue to Him. But the reason for it was not that they were so tolerant, but that they were utterly indifferent to everything of that kind. They did not care in the very least what God anybody worshipped, because they did not believe there were Gods. It was nothing to them. You were quite welcome to do as you pleased.

Now some of those ancient Romans are incarnated in the English race. There are quite a number of people now who are tolerant to all forms of belief just because they do not believe in anything. They look on religion as a nice sort of thing to amuse the ladies, but of course for a man it is not a serious matter. There are many people who hold that point of view. Now, that is not the kind of tolerance at which we are aiming. The Master says here: "We should take a hearty interest in the beliefs of those of another religion." Therefore you must understand those beliefs, and your tolerance must come, not from indifference, but from a

recognition that these things also are ways to the highest. Our President once said, I remember,—I often quote from her because I feel I cannot do better—"The other man's beliefs ought to be sacred to you, because they are sacred to him." Because they are sacred to another man, therefore to you also they must have their sacredness. One very small manifestation of this is that, when one goes into a temple, or church, of some form of religion which is not one's own, one conforms to the custom of the place. I have known people who absolutely refused to bow towards the altar, to genuflect, and who made a point of turning their backs upon it. I have known people who tried the same thing with our Muhammadan brothers; they tried going into a Mosque without taking off their shoes. But our Muhammadan brothers are not quite so tolerant as our Catholic brothers, and the man who does that very rarely survives to try it again. I have always held, myself, long before I came into the Theosophical Society, that one had no business in the church or temple of another faith, if one were not prepared to behave so as not to hurt the feelings of the regular worshippers. As I say, you need not force your conscience in any way. So take a hearty interest in other religions. If you recognise that all these people are manifestations of the One Self, then you will see that whatever line of thought appeals to one of them, cannot be a thing at which you should look askance—a thing which you

should condemn. Very often childish manifestations do take place, childish manifestations of religious feelings, but he would be no good man, who made fun of them because to him they appear to be childish. That is a thing which sometimes happens. The less developed intellect cannot be expected to take the view that your very highly developed intellect can take, but you must have patience. Above all do not hurt another's feelings. Do not, from any sense of superiority, turn aside from any religion which appeals to him.

He goes on to say:

> But in order to gain this perfect tolerance, you must yourself first be free from bigotry and superstition.

We ought to be free from it in the Theosophical Society, but sometimes it does crop up a little, you know, even now. The bigot considers only his own opinions; he never thinks of the other side of the case. He is usually quite incapable of seeing that there is another side. Of course one ought to try to see that and to identify oneself with the other man's point of view, even if it were merely as an exercise for oneself, so that one may learn to see from how many different angles the truth may be reflected by the human mind. It is a very interesting thing to see. Remember the old saying in Rome: "I am a man, and nothing human is foreign to me." That is precisely the line which you ought to take. Any line of vision which appeals to any body of men must be

of interest to you, because after all you also are men. Of course there are certain broad divisions, such as you get for example in the case of the Catholic and the Protestant. They each of them (I am classing them very broadly) approach Christianity from their own point of view, and many on both sides are quite incapable of understanding the other viewpoint. The Catholic takes the view that a great deal of ceremony should appear in his ritual, that it should be made in every way as beautiful as it can be made, in order that it may glorify the God Whom he worships, and that it may appeal to the people. He feels very strongly and keenly that this ritual and this ceremony and all these beautiful surroundings are of the very greatest help to him in his devotions. And if he feels that, why should he not have them?

To the Protestant, on the other hand, all that is very wicked and very dreadful because it turns away the man's mind from the inner meaning. It causes him to rest in the outer and therefore to lose the inner. The Protestant is perhaps a man of whom it would be true that, if he had to attend to all these ceremonies, he would not, at the same time, be able to keep before him the inner things. In other words, he is a person of a different type, and what appeals so strongly to the Catholic does not appeal to him at all, and would be rather a nuisance, a disturbance, inasmuch as it would interfere with his inner devotion. There may be some truth in each of these contentions,

but there can be no possible reason why each man may not follow the way which he finds to be best for himself, the path which seems to him the most direct; and all that is needed from the other man is that he should recognise the fact. Each should say: "I prefer my path, but I am perfecty willing that every other man should have the same right, that he also should take the path which seems the best to him." That is a common-sense statement which does not seem much to grant, and yet very few will credit it. They all feel that what is best for them must be best for others. You must learn the wider attitude—that there are many paths, and that they all lead equally to the summit of the mountain, and that each man should be left to take that which is nearest to him. You should not have even the slightest feeling in your heart that your path would be better for him, but should leave him in perfect peace to take his own way.

XIX

May 11, 1915.

OF course you will all meet with a great deal of superstition around you. It has often a very strong hold on the minds of men—so strong indeed that sometimes people have said that it is impossible to have religion without superstition, that you never find them apart. Well, it is true that there is a very great deal of mixture, but we at least must try to separate the two elements, and of course we must not condemn the superstitious people. We study their superstitions and try to understand them, because, as is said in the Hindu books: "Truth alone conquers, not falsehood"; and so, wherever there is a superstition that has a very wide hold, you may be reasonably sure that there is a fragment of truth behind it somewhere or other.

Generally speaking, these things are not mere inventions, they are distortions or exaggerations of certain facts, often quite wild distortions; but there is some shadow of truth behind them, and the interesting point in them is to find where that fragment of truth lies, and what exactly it is.

It is a little difficult to define superstition. Our President defined it once as "the taking of the

non-essential for the essential". That is a good definition, but it does not perhaps quite cover all the ground. She gives, I remember, a celebrated Indian instance of it: how there was once a devotee who had a pet cat, who was always coming to him and fondling him, while he performed his ceremonies. He therefore, at the time of his devotions, tied it to the leg of a bed to keep it quiet. In process of time this was handed down to his sons and to others, but always with the proviso that there must be a cat present, which must be tied to the cot; and presently all the rest of the ceremonies were forgotten and the only thing that was done was to tie the cat to the leg of the cot. That was clearly a case of the non-essential being taken for the essential. The story is told in India to show how sometimes the least important point is the one which persists, and which is regarded as the most important. It is by no means so impossible as you might think, because there are other stories which run nearly on the same lines.

I suppose you get much less of it out here than we do at home, because people are more likely to take a broad and common-sense view of things in the newer countries; but I know that the Sunday superstition is a very serious trouble in some parts of our own country at home, especially in Scotland. In that country nothing at all can be done on a Sunday. A man must not even go out for a walk; he must not whistle or sing a song, except, I suppose, in church.

The basis of that was quite a good idea, the idea of setting aside one day in the week especially to be devoted to the service of the Deity, to be more sacred than the others. That was not a bad idea, but it has now degenerated into a ridiculous attitude, where the object for which it was set aside has been forgotten, and all that remains is the idea that no ordinary work should be done on that day, that being obviously a rule made to secure the comfort of those who might otherwise be compelled by their masters to go through their ordinary work just the same as on every other day. The idea was evidently to minimise that danger, and make the day one that could be devoted to spiritual things. But the Divine service aspect has dropped very much into the background. There is more drunkenness and general looseness, in various ways, on Sunday than on other days.

There you have a case where the non-essential part of the thing has become the essential, and so the spirit of the thing has been very largely lost. It is the same with many other institutions; the same perhaps with the idea of Christmas. At Christmas and Easter, for example, people hold a festival because of certain great religious events, the birth of the Christ and His Ascension; but many people now entirely forget these, yet still keep up the festival.

Then you have another definition of superstition, which again is a good one, but, also again, does not

quite cover every thing, and that is the holding of any belief without foundation. That also is a definition. Only if you should accept that, then we shall find that a great many people are holding actual truths as superstitions, because a great many people believe things which are quite true, but believe them on no rational foundation. It is one of the exercises which our Masters set to their pupils, to find out how much they really know and how much they only believe. If you try to do that in your own case, you will be surprised to find how little you know of your own self, and how very much you are only believing on the statements of other people. You may be quite justified, but it is quite true about vast numbers of facts in ordinary life—the rotation of the earth, the existence of foreign countries which you have never seen. You are justified in believing, only you must know whether you do believe, or whether you know.

So with belief only: If you believe, then what do you believe, and on what ground? And is this a reasonable ground? In the case of the rotation of the earth, there are certain experiments which prove the facts. You read about certain foreign countries and, though you have not seen them yourself, you are justified in believing the statements made by those who have seen them. But in vast numbers of cases the things which you hear and believe have no such definite foundation. In many cases, what you hear about other people is the merest gossip; you have

no true foundation for such belief. There again, I am not saying that there is more superstition in Christianity than in any other religion, but there are many cardinal beliefs which are true, but the ground on which people believe them is not rational, and therefore to these people they are superstitions. Why, the very belief in God Himself is a matter of belief and not knowledge to most people. There are those who know; all trained clairvoyants know of the existence of a mighty Power behind, but most people do not know. Some who hold that belief, hold it on reasonable grounds, because they have studied the matter and draw their own inferences, but vast numbers of people hold it because they have been told so, and if you ask: "Did those who told you know it at first hand?" they would be bound to answer, "No".

The ordinary belief of the Christian in Heaven and Hell is absolutely a superstition. There is no rational basis for it whatever. Yet if you said that to the average Christian, he would say that you were an atheist and that you were making a mock of his religious belief. He believes it very strongly on no sound basis whatever. The whole question of eternal fire and everlasting punishment is nothing but a peculiarly pernicious superstition. The mediæval monks taught it. I suppose the first men who taught it may or not have believed in it. I do not know. I am sorry to say that thousands, millions of people

have believed it since, thereby most assuredly yielding themselves to superstition. There is no rational basis for it whatever, as I have frequently told some of you on various occasions. The only thing, which from the Christian point of view ought to be of any importance is what the Christ Himself said on the subject. There are, I think, eight passages in which He is supposed to mention this eternal punishment, and every one of these eight instances can be quite plainly shown to have nothing to do with the popular idea which is attributed to them. There is a book called "Salvator Mundi," written by a Christian clergyman, the Rev. Sandal Cox, who goes very carefully into the original Greek of what the Christ is alleged to have said, and explains what the Christ did mean, and gives the other words which He must have used, if speaking in Greek, in order to fit in with the popular interpretation. He had not meant what people usually think He meant. That shows at once that there is no rational basis for the belief in everlasting punishment, and of course one can refute it also from many other points of view. One can say that if there be a God, and if He be a loving Father, that is absolutely impossible. It is a superstition held by thousands of people, which has worked the most enormous evil and is still working it; for, ridiculous as you may think it, it is a fact that it is being believed here and now in this very city of yours. I should have hoped that most Christians had outgrown the

crude form of that belief, but they have not. I saw myself, not long ago, a Catholic Catechism which is taught to children, and in that the old idea of Hell, as a place of everlasting torment, was set forth in the same old foolish way—not the slightest improvement at all. We might still be living in the most brutal part of the Middle Ages, so far as the teaching given to little children is concerned. It is a very sad thing. Of course there are good many Christian sects which have risen above that; but, on the other hand, there is the oldest and greatest of them all still clinging to its mediæval teachings. Of course individual priests explain the whole thing away, very much as we might do, but there is the printed word, a thing which they teach to innocent little children, an utterly horrible and blasphemous thing, because it starts them in life with an altogether wrong idea of God and so does the greatest possible harm to them. Probably nobody believes it; but if they do it is a superstition and a peculiarly horrible one.

As I have said, many even of the truths that they hold are held as superstitions, because they have no rational basis for them. We in Theosophy offer them a rational basis for the truths which they believe, and we correct the falsehoods; but they are not in the least grateful to us. They ought to be.

In the preparation for the priesthood, I had to study the evidences of Christianity. Those very evidences, which priests have to study, turn many

men aside and make them free-thinkers. I can assure you that there is no evidence whatever, which you would accept at this day about any other subject, that Christ ever lived at all on earth. The only certain evidence is the clairvoyant evidence. Therefore they ought to be very grateful to us who give them that testimony. They are not, yet, short of that, everything that you take up to prove it breaks in your hands, and there seems to be great deal of definite proof to the contrary, certainly with regard to the data which are commonly accepted. If you went back further you would find nothing to contradict it; but there is no certainty, there is nothing to prove it. Proof is very difficult about a thing that happened long ago. But at any rate there is nothing to which you could trust yourself in a court of law. There is nothing which in ordinary history you would accept, save only the clairvoyant evidence. So you see that there is quite a good deal, which, though true, is believed on insufficient grounds, and so to those people it is a superstition. You remember the teaching of the Lord Buddha in that respect, very fine teaching it was. I wish very much, I have often wished, that our Christian friends had been as common-sense in their methods as were members of that older religion, the Buddhist. The teaching of the Buddha was so pre-eminently common-sense. You may remember at the Council, called after His death, to determine which of the many reports current

should be accepted as representing His sayings, the very first rule they laid down was "That which is contrary to reason and common-sense is not the teaching of the Buddha." They ruled out everything that did not satisfy them from that point of view, saying: "This is obviously not common-sense. He could not have said it." They may perhaps have cast aside one or two things they did not understand; but at any rate they did save themselves from a vast amount of superstition. If only the same rule had held good in Christianity we should have been saved a vast amount of trouble—that doctrine of everlasting punishment, for example.

The Lord Buddha Himself at Kalana, spoke quite plainly as to reasons for belief. They came to Him in this village of Kalana and said: "Lord, there are so many systems of philosophy, so many teachings along these different lines, and now You come to us with another, and a new form of teaching; how can we teach people to discriminate between these things? If we accept Your teaching, how are we to give it to other people, so that they will see that it is better than these others? All alike are great men who teach these different systems, how are we to decide?" Then He spoke quite simply and plainly to those people. He said: "Believe nothing because a great person tells it to you, because a person may be great along one line, and yet may be quite in error along other lines. Believe nothing because you find it written in

sacred books, because sacred books are all from varying authority, and they may be quite true and holy in regard to certain things, but vastly in error with regard to others. Believe nothing because you find it to be common belief, because the common belief is quite capable of serious error in many directions. Believe nothing because of presumed spiritual inspiration, that is, because you think it arises in you and seems to commend itself to you, because you may be in error with regard to that." So He went through the various reasons for which people generally accept things, and He said: "Do not believe for any of these reasons. Do not believe even what I, the Buddha, tell you, unless it commends itself to your reason and common-sense, because, unless it commends itself to your reason and common-sense, it is not true for you; but if it so commends itself then act accordingly and abundantly."

That is a very fine line to take. A Teacher who speaks in that way is one whom you may very safely follow, and I wish very much that other religions had been equally brave and equally outspoken in that matter. Of course one may sometimes know a thing to be true without being able to reason it out; that is the other side of the question. I think that many of you must have had the same experience that I had, when first these Theosophical truths came before me in Mr. Sinnett's book, *The Occult World*. I at once knew they were true. I was certain of it. I felt

inside: "Yes, this is the very truth for which I have so long been seeking. Here it is." But I could not have given you any actual reason. I could not have built up reasons by degrees, which made it very probable that this was true; but I could not have given you reason sufficient for so decided a stand of belief. I knew it by intuition. You will find that fairly constantly in your own case. You, who are old students of these things, have gradually built up a certain fabric of truth in your minds and from that there should be quite certainly a knowledge as to whether any new thing put before you will fit into its place in that scheme or not, and so you have an intuitive feeling as to whether a thing is true or false, even though you cannot give a physical-plane reason for the intensity of your feeling. You can always argue and give reasons that will buttress your position; but they are usually not sufficient to account for the intense certainty of your conviction.

That is a case where the ego knows inside and has good reasons for his knowledge, but he cannot impress all the details for his reasons on your physical brain. Only the fact comes through that he knows. So when a new truth is presented to you, you know at once whether you can accept that or not. That is not superstition, although it may be difficult to distinguish. That is an intense inner conviction. I do not think you will ever find anybody ever had that intense inner conviction about hell. They believe because they

have been taught, because they have been told, not because they have the inner conviction that they will be burned for ever. That sounds like abandoning reason in favour of intuition, but then you must remember that that very word "Buddhi" which we translate as "Intuition," is translated in India as "pure reason". It is practically the pure reason of which you hear so much in philosophical discussion, that pure reason which sees at once for itself whether a thing is right and reasonable, or not; and so it cannot be said that, when we have an intuition of that sort—we believe without reason, but simply that the pure reason is on a level where it cannot be brought down and explained in concrete terms. The reason is these, but it is the reason of the ego, a higher type than any that we have down here.

Then the Master goes on to give instances with regard to this question of superstition:

> You must learn that no ceremonies are necessary; else you will think yourself somehow better than those who do not perform them. Yet you must not condemn others who still cling to ceremonies. Let them do as they will; only they must not interfere with you who know the truth—they must not try to force upon you that which you have outgrown. Make allowance for everything; be kindly towards everything.

This whole question of ceremonies is very largely one of temperament. The Master says that you must learn that no ceremonies are necessary. Do not forget that this was spoken to an Indian boy, and so,

first of all, there is little doubt that the Master had in His mind the immense importance attached to ceremonies in India, and the great number which a Brahmin is supposed to perform; and this boy was a special type of Brahmin, a peculiar variety, so to speak, and of course he had been accustomed from childhood to perform ceremonies at every minute of the day. He could not wash himself, for example, without throwing the water round in a particular shape. There was a particular way in which every little thing had to be done, and he had texts to recite with every act. Not a bad idea, of course, for one who is devoting the whole of his life to spirituality. It is the same thing which is prescribed for the monks and nuns in some of the contemplative orders in Catholicism. But the Master impresses strongly upon him: "Remember that no ceremonies are necessary." I should think it very probable that he might have neglected in the course of his education (his time was pretty well filled) some of the ordinary Brahminic ceremonies, and that perhaps some relation, or friend, in the officious way they have of trying to do everybody's business, might have said: "It is very wicked not to do that," and this passage may very possibly have referred to some case of that sort; so He would say: "Remember that no ceremonies are necessary, and especially you must never think that those who do the ceremonies are any better than those who do not." That might quite

certainly have been said. Very probably some one said to him, " But all good Brahmanas do these things ; it is a sign of falling away from grace if you do not." So the Master may have said : " Remember that none of these things are necessary, but on the other hand do not despise the people who still cling to ceremonies." Now that may very well have been a hint, too, in regard to something some of us had said, because we who are Westerners do not always appreciate the Brahmana's ceremonial, and quite conceivably we may have said with regard to some such ceremony : " That is rather ridiculous, is it not ? " And so, in order that he might not repeat something of that sort and so hurt the feelings of the orthodox, the Master said to him : "Do not in any way despise the people who still cling to ceremonies." He explains later on how these things work. They are not necessities, but they often are supports for people. They help them to realise things. I know the Master sometimes speaks of them as being like the double lines between which a child learns to write ; they are very useful in teaching him to make the letters of the same size, and guiding him to write straight, but very soon he learns to write better and much more freely without them. And so these Brahmana ceremonies might be thought of perhaps as necessary, but ceremony may be taken in several senses. I mean that such ceremony as the Brahmana has to perform is simply a kind of setting to his life,

so that there shall always be this religious background to every daily act.

Then you have quite another aspect of ceremony, the great public ceremonies such as you have in the Christian Church. Now, they have their place and their right. It is said here that no ceremonies are necessary. Now, that would apply more particularly, in regard to Christianity, to those in the church who would say it is necessary for salvation that a child should be baptised, that it is necessary for salvation that a person should partake of the Blessed Sacrament. The Master says that no ceremonies are necessary. He does not say that they may not be very useful; they are eminently useful to persons of a certain type of mind. Remember that many ceremonies produce definite results, results as definite as those of a chemical experiment, and just as scientifically arrived at, and in many cases those results are very good—for example the saying of the Mass, or as I should prefer to put it: "The offering of the Mass," the recitation of that Liturgy of the Blessed Sacrament in which the Bread and the Wine are consecrated. That has a very fine and definite effect indeed. It is an arrangement made specially by the Head of the Christian religion, the Founder of the Christian religion, for the distribution of what is commonly called Grace (we should call it spiritual power) through His Church, and it is a method by which He has arranged that that should be daily done. Now

nobody need put himself in the way of that, but there is a definite outflowing of spiritual force, and those who know how can take advantage of that. There are plenty of other ways in which spiritual force can be brought down—not just identically that force, but other forces and powers in other ways. Here is a definite way arranged for a definite set of people, with a mechanical physical side to it, in order to bring the thing down to the physical plane. You must understand that all these forces, no matter how spiritual, no matter how glorious, work under the laws of Nature, and if, therefore, you wish that the benefit of them should be felt on the physical plane, there must be a physical mechanism through which they can work. It is so with all such things. Electricity, for example, is a wonderful natural force; it exists all about us all the time and is always in activity. But if you want it to perform a particular work in a particular way in a particular place, you must provide certain physical machinery through which it can operate. If you want things done on this plane, then you must provide the machinery through which they can work, and that is so with these other quite spiritual forces. I do not say that you cannot get an outpouring of spiritual force in all sorts of other ways—certainly you can if you happen to be the kind of person to whom these other ways appeal. But there are many people who would always feel themselves vague and uncertain with subjective methods,

and to them the outer form, as to which they can be reasonably sure, is a very great comfort and a very great help. And so here again we come upon the ever present controversy between Protestant and Catholic, as to the use of ceremonies and ritual, pictures and images. It is a never ending controversy, precisely because both sides are right, and in a way both sides are wrong, wrong if they hold their particular method to be absolutely necessary, and right, if they think of it as the method best suited to them and thousands of others. So that those who find the ceremony, the statue, the picture, the physical-plane manifestation necessary, belong to one definite type, a very old and noble type, one of the Seven Great Rays, at the head of each of which stands one of the Seven Great Spirits before the Throne of God. And those who find these things rather troubling and distracting are also following along their own line. They belong to another Ray and to another type, and each of these has a vast field for its followers, just as it has its dangers, of course. The use of the ceremony, the statue, the picture, has the danger that it may become merely formal, that the ceremony may be performed without much thought, and that the statue may be taken for the reality behind it. I doubt whether this has really happened even in the case of the most primitive people, but that is a danger which people always profess to see, and I suppose really do see.

On the other hand there is a danger in the case of those who depend entirely upon their own inner illumination of self-deception. If they see a certain ceremony performed and certain definite force going out, and they are there and receive a part of the force, they may easily imagine that they can obtain these illuminations entirely by themselves.

There are dangers along all lines. All the lines have their places and their use, but just exactly as that controversy goes on between the two sections of the Christians, so in other religions, in other parts of the world, there are the various aspects which a religion may take. Each of them appears the only one to its enthusiastic devotees, and in many cases all the others are looked upon as superstitions. Certainly the Protestant looks upon the Catholics as superstitious persons who worship idols. It is exceedingly probable that no human being ever did worship idols, not even savages. I know very well the missionaries think of the Indians as idolaters, but if you were to ask a small coolie boy whether the image to which he is making his offering is the God, he would say at once "No, it is not the God." God is one, God is far away behind it all, but that is an image to remind you of Him. So you can hardly call that the worship of idols, but it suits the missionaries to say that it is so. No ceremony is necessary, and yet these ceremonies have their use, and on the whole there are more people who will be benefited by them than injured.

We in the Theosophical Society are not in the way of thinking greatly of ceremony, but then after all, you have to remember that we have to a certain extent selected ourselves, so that we are not typical of the mass of people, because at least we have done a certain amount of thinking—it may not be very much, but at least it is enough to draw us a little aside from the ordinary run. Therefore we are peculiar to that extent, that we have thought a little more about these matters, and just the fact that we have done that is likely to draw us a little away from belief in the ordinary ceremonies. So that perhaps we are not a fair sample of people in that respect, and if you were to take the great mass of the people on the whole they would be more readily impressed by ceremony than we are. Therefore the Church is wise in providing ceremonies. The fact that they have persisted and have been carried on for these two thousand years is a proof that they were necessary; and while we say that they are not necessary, we do not deny that they are, in many cases, very helpful to a man's progress.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita* it is written: "Let no man upset the mind of ignorant people." One does not wish to thrust one's Theosophy on people who are not quite ready for it. In India, the very home of ceremony, the man who is highest and most respected of all is the Sannyasi, or Yogi, and he performs no ceremonies at all. He breaks and throws away the

Brahmana thread, the most important Brahmana possession, put upon him as a boy when he was made a Brahmana, and worn always by him. He changes the actual thread, but continues to wear the same symbol till the day of his death, and that, the most sacred symbol of all, the Sannyasi breaks and throws away.

When our President instituted at Adyar the Order of the Theosophical Sannyasis, that was part of the ceremony of the induction. These people came before her in the shrine room and took certain vows to serve the Masters and to acknowledge her as the head of their order, and simultaneously broke their threads and gave them to her, thereby renouncing their position in the highest caste because they had risen above caste. That shows how, in the very land of ceremonies, they recognise that these things are not necessary. But remember that a man may perform them for the sake of others, when he himself has got quite beyond the necessity for them. Many men in India, I am sure, do that. Many Theosophists, who know that the ceremonies are of no real necessity for them, continue to perform them for the sake of others who are helped by them. In an English village also the squire of the village continues to go to Church for the sake of setting an example to the villagers, even though he himself may have his doubts about the value of the teaching on many points.

> Let them do as they will; only they must not interfere with you who know the truth—they must not try to force upon you that which you have outgrown.

You will notice, all the way through, how the Master emphasises very strongly each man's rights to manage his own affairs. Again and again He says, "Do not interfere with other people. You claim perfect right to your own opinion and you must allow the same to others, and you must allow it so fully that not only will you not directly interfere, but you will not even make remarks about them because they do things which are different from what you would do. You may not be able to force other people to go to Church, but you may say among yourselves, 'How silly of Mrs. So and So not to go to church.'" That is wrong, because that is an endeavour to blame them for not holding the same opinion that you do. So He says:

> Make allowance for everything; be kindly towards everything.

Then He goes on again (this is again I am sure, is addressed to Alcyone's own circumstances):

> Now that your eyes are opened, some of your old beliefs, your old ceremonies, may seem to you absurd; perhaps, indeed, they really are so. Yet though you can no longer take part in them, respect them for the sake of those good souls to whom they are still important. They have their place, they have their use; they are like those double lines which guided you as a child to write straight and evenly, until you learnt to write far better and more freely without them. There was a time when you needed them; but now that time is past.

Always be gentle, always be kindly to these remnants of childhood. You know how kind you are to the physical child in daily life. You see a child nursing a bundle of rags and pretending it is a doll. Well, of course that is a superstition, quite a superstition, but at the same time it does not occur to you indignantly to scold the child. You remember perhaps, if you are fortunate, the time when you yourself used to make believe in the same sort of way, and you can quite recognise that that bundle of rags may have all the attributes of a doll to the child. On the physical plane it is a bundle of rags, but in the child's imagination it is a doll, perhaps almost a living doll with all sorts of qualities; and so why should one disturb the idea in the child's mind? The idea in itself is a good one; there is a protective and maternal feeling around, although the rags are not a doll.

In just the same way I have often seen, in India, the common people, who are very like children, making their little offerings to the Deity in quite a childish way. They will tie a little bit of rag on to a tree, as an offering to the Deity of that tree. The average Christian missionary, who came along, would be quite angry about it. Thereby he shows his own ignorance, because the offering is made in all good heart and in good faith. The small soul, the comparatively primitive and childlike soul, meant it well, and the thing should be taken, like the child's rag doll, for what it means.

Then they pour out a little water as libation, or they offer a flower—a very small offering truly, but why should it be condemned? You know that the Christ Himself said that those who gave even a cup of cold water in His name and for His sake should be no means lose their reward. Assuredly it is true in other religions; so let us always remember the advice, "Make allowance for everything and be kindly towards everything," because, poor though the offering may be, even though to us it may seem ridiculous, yet if it comes from the heart it is a true and genuine offering.

I have often seen very touching cases of that in the East where offerings that seem to us absurd, even irreverent, are brought and offered. But I am sure that, where the heart is pure and the intention is good, such offerings are by no means to be despised. And so, if He accepts them, who are we that on His account we should try to find fault and consider them as a slight to Him?

Remember the story of Abraham in the Talmud. Abraham, it is said, once received a man in the desert, and was about to give him food and drink, as you would naturally give to every one who came along in the desert. Abraham called upon him to praise God before eating, but when he refused and said that he did not know anything about God, Abraham arose in anger and turned him out of his tent and would not give him anything at all. Then

the Lord came, as apparently He used to do in those days, and said: "Why did you send him away?" Abraham said with great indignation: "Lord, he refused to recognise Thy Name. He is an infidel of the worst type." "Yes," God said, "but I have borne with him for sixty years; surely you can bear with him for one hour."

There is a great deal to be learned from that story.

XX

May 18, 1915

JUST where we begin to-day the Master makes a quotation from the Christian Scriptures: He says:

> A great Teacher once wrote: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things."

He quotes that from S. Paul, and He says quite clearly and distinctly that you have to learn that no ceremony is necessary, but at the same time you must be very careful in no way to despise the people who still cling to them, because all these things, even such ceremonies as they use so freely in India, are very necessary for the child soul to keep on the right path.

The same thing cannot be said in quite the same way of those other ceremonies of which I was speaking—the great public ceremonies, of the Church for example. There we come into the presence of the fact that there are different types of people. There is one type which finds itself very strongly attracted to beautiful ceremonial and ritual; which finds the highest that is in it called forth by

such ceremony. But there are others for whom the ceremony is to some extent an empty thing, because that is not in their line and they have rather the subjective or mystical idea of approaching God by means of their own interior feeling, and thus touching the God within them.

These might be described very roughly as the Catholic and Protestant attitudes respectively. They are often called the Occult and Mystic attitudes, but even there some of you may have that mystic turn of mind which is not attracted to outward ceremony, but loves rather to turn inward and to reach by contemplation the God within. If that is your way, then you should follow it ; but be careful lest you be selfish, lest in trying to follow your own way you should become intolerant of that which is clearly the way for thousands upon thousands of your fellow creatures. Roughly speaking, the Protestant objection to ceremonies is always a selfish objection. The man does not need them for himself ; and so he does not want anyone else to be helped by a thing which would not help him. He forgets that, though the ceremony takes place, he need not attend it if he does not wish, he need not take part in it. For the ceremonialist to try to force his ceremony upon the Mystic would again be selfish and intolerant. That is never done in these days, but it was done by the Church in the Middle Ages. But even though you attend, you can always abstract yourself ; one can follow one's own

line. It is to the Mystic, who often has that tendency, that it is especially necessary to address this word of warning. The other man needs his ceremony, if you think you do not need it well and good. You need not rob the other man of it—you can give to it as much attention as you choose. You need not be in any way interfered with by the presence of the ceremony, whereas its absence would be a very serious matter indeed for the man to whom it is of importance. Therefore, if you consider your mystic attitude the superior attitude, you should take care that it does not degenerate into anything of the nature of selfishness. There are those who need the ceremony. You can have no possible right to despise them or think less of them, for that, as I have already said, is one of the great Rays or Types. It is at the head of that particular Ray, as far as this planet is concerned, that the Master, The Comte de St. Germain, stands. Thus the ceremony comes to you very well authenticated—very well supported; but those for whom that is not the way are not therefore encouraged to follow it or to take it up.

The great ceremonies of the Christian Church, for example, were especially ordained to do certain things. They were to a large extent a new departure made by the Lord Maitreya, in the nature of an experiment. If you study any of the great religions which had existed before, you will find that practically all their ceremonies were of a distinctly personal

character. Study the Hindu Religion in any of its various manifestations and you will find that its relations are always individual relations; there is nothing like what Christians call public worship of any sort whatever. Each man goes up to the temple and makes his own little offering of rice, or fruit or flowers; there is nothing like congregational work. It is the same with the Buddhists. The people join together each morning to take the obligations of the Five Commandments. That is the only thing that could be thought of as a public service, and even then it is not repeated at any set time, but as sufficient people gather in the temple. The idea of a great public service commenced practically with Christianity, and it is a new idea. You may or may not feel it, each individual of you, desirable or necessary for you, but it does not in the least alter the fact that it is a scheme—and a very ingenious scheme—for the spreading of force over the whole country-side. The theory of the Christian Church is that churches shall exist in every town and every village. So in Christian countries they do. By the organisation of the church, each of them is a centre for the radiation of spiritual force. It does not matter, for the purpose of that radiation, what sort of priest you have in charge of the service; it does not matter whether there is a congregation or not, practically nothing matters so long as the appointed ritual is carried out. There is the daily sacrifice of the Mass, as the Catholics call it—the celebration of

the Holy Communion, the Eucharist, as it is more often called in the English Church. Now there is attached to that a definite reservoir of force, which is drawn upon by certain definite words and actions on the part of one who is authorised to say these words and to undertake these actions. When he does that he lets loose, as it were, a flood of spiritual power. That is a definite act, which has a perfectly definite result on several planes simultaneously. For the purposes of that act it does not matter what kind of man the priest is. I do not say it is not important, because, if he is a good and earnest and devout man, then in addition to the unlocking of the portals and letting out forces, he adds to that a vast force coming from his own devotion—his own earnestness, his own feeling of love. But the tapping of that reservoir is not a matter which is concerned with his character or feeling at all, it is a definite act which he performs by turning the tap. The tap is turned equally whether he is a good man or a bad man, whether he thinks of what he is doing or whether he does it casually. So you must always bear in mind that these particular services are, as it were, certain acts of magic—of the higher magic, the white magic, and they were ordained to produce particular results.

Many people object to ceremonies and say that they are surrounded by so much that is objectionable. That may be true, but it does not alter the definite

fact that, if there be those who do not wish to share in that spiritual outpouring or who think that they can receive an outpouring more suited to themselves in some other way, they are perfectly at liberty to do so, but at the same time it would be selfish of them to the last degree that they should try to prevent that outpouring from being available for those to whom it is a benefit. All that we need, in all these things, is sufficient toleration and gentleness; we should simply let each man go his own way; let each man take the road which is for him the easiest road. It is the greatest mistake ever to try to force other people to take our road or to cavil at them for going their own way. Let every man (as the Apostle Paul said) be fully persuaded in his own mind, and then let him go on. Why should others be worried as to his path? There has always been very strongly that feeling between the Catholic and the Protestant. Each thinks that he holds the only way which is right and that the other is hopelessly wrong. That is childish to the last degree. There are many paths, and each man would do well to take that which is most suited to him. But, to make this possible, you need tolerance; and this a Theosophist should have but unfortunately has not always. You take your path, whatever it may be. No one wants to interfere with you, but at least that carries with it a corollary that you should not try to interfere with anyone else.

So all those great public ceremonies are not necessary to the attainment of Nirvana. There are many other ways. One would not say, although some are childish, that they have been outgrown, but rather that they represent different lines. If you are on those lines they may mean very much to you. If you are not, they do not. But do not make the mistake of thinking that they mean nothing. They only mean nothing to you, because you do not happen to be on that particular line. Each one of us has his own language into which he was born, the language of the nation to which he belongs, and just in the same way each of us has what might be called his religious language—the way in which his thoughts and feelings and aspirations most readily express themselves. It would be in the highest degree foolish of you to despise a Frenchman, because his language is different from yours. It would be equally foolish to despise anyone, because his religion is different from yours. A Frenchman says " maison " instead of " house "; but it means exactly the same thing. It would be impossible to argue that one is a better word than the other. They are merely two words meaning the same thing. Just so the line of the Mystic and the line of the Occultist both lead to the same goal. They are different words meaning the same thing. Why then should we quarrel with them ? We have so strongly the feeling, very often, that our own way *must* be the right way.

Just in the same way the old woman in the time of the Napoleonic wars prayed to God that the English might be successful, and when they reminded her that probably people on the other side were praying for the success of the French, she replied: "Well, what does that matter? How would God understand them when they speak such nonsense?" It is exactly the same thing as to say: "How can a man obtain benefit from so foolish a religion?" For you your religion is better, and it really may be a more advanced one; but you cannot expect the other person to see that. English may be a finer language than French. I do not know; it is less exact and much more copious. Perhaps there is something to be said for each. It is the same thing with religion also. Some people go best along one way and some along another. It seems so simple, but somehow or other you cannot get people to see it. We, as Theosophists, must not only say it but must really feel it. We must not say: "Well, poor fellow, it is a pity, but I suppose he must go his own way." That is not in the very least Theosophy. You must let him understand his way is as good as yours, and you must really feel inside yourself that his way is as good as yours, and that is not so easy, but it is a way to the highest. You who love ceremonial, remember that the Mystic, who does not love it, may also obtain inner enlightenment. Mind, I do think it is a very much more difficult way, but still it is a possibility,

and those of you, who pride yourselves on having that power, should remember that ceremonial is also one of the lines and that the ceremonies in question were instituted by the Lord Maitreya Himself, who is no mean judge of the way to attain the best result. So we need much more tolerance, we need hearty appreciation each of the other man's way. Difficult to get, but we are the very people who ought to be trying to get it. At least we are trying to get a little in advance of the average in order that we may help people; and this is one of the ways in which we must be different from the rest. We must really look benignantly upon other people's beliefs. Then He goes on to say:

> Yet he who has forgotten his childhood and lost sympathy with the children is not the man who can teach them or help them.

Now, there again is very decidedly a distinguishing quality of the Occultist. He is a man who has not forgotten his spiritual childhood, and so he can help all; so he is able to understand the various religious languages, the various ways of putting things.

It is a very good exercise for us to try to understand how things appear to others. I do not mean in religion only, but in ordinary life. I can tell you one thing, for example, which practically nobody does, and yet it is a most useful thing to do. Our brotherhood is without distinction of creed, caste, sex, or

colour, but we are very decided in our feelings of sex all the same. A man—well he is a man; how can he be anything else? He forgets the fact that he has had many births in feminine bodies. A woman, of course she is a woman, how could she be anything else? But it is exceedingly good for the man to try to put himself in thought in the woman's place and to understand her way of looking at things. It is not easy, but it is an exceedingly good exercise, and so likewise is it for a woman to try to see how a man envisages certain things. Even that alone is a revelation to most people, for the two points of view are different in many ways. And if one can identify one's consciousness with that of the opposite sex one has already made some steps towards a brotherhood which transcends the idea of sex. Very often there is a feeling of opposition between the two. You constantly find it said that all the laws are made by man. There is a sort of natural tendency for the two to draw apart and to look upon one another, not exactly with hostility, but with uncomprehending eyes. We ought to try to understand the other person's point of view, even if in this other case the person happens to belong to the opposite sex. It is an important thing and before you try to understand the point of view of a Hindu or a Buddhist, you who are men might try to understand the point of view of your sisters or mothers or wives. It is all helpful. Whenever you can really understand and thoroughly sympathise with

another person's point of view you have widened your own view by just that much. It is a distinctly useful thing to do. We must not look at things only from our standpoint.

> So look kindly, gently, tolerantly upon all; but upon all alike, Buddhist or Hindu, Jain or Jew, Christian or Muhammadan.

Once more, it does not mean that all these things can mean the same to you. After all you belong to one of these lines and that will mean most to you, but you must understand that to the other man his line is as good as yours is to you. You must be all things to all men. Remember how S. Paul talks about that. He says he made himself " all things to all men, so that by some means I may gain some of them ". He met each man along his own line. If the man was an ignorant man he did not pour upon him his own knowledge. He descended to his own level and talked to him along lines he could understand. Again it is like talking to a man in his own language and not in a foreign language. If you want a man to understand, you must say something to him which means something. So we who are Theosophists may many of us still have an outward religion and cling to it, and yet I think that we ought to be able to say that we belong to no religion exclusively, but to all of them inclusively. I myself, for example, am a Christian priest, but I am also a Buddhist, because I took the vows and obligations by which I accepted

the Lord Buddha as my guide. You are not asked to renounce any other religion. Buddhism is perhaps the widest of all religions in that respect. Buddhists do not ask you what you believe. They merely ask: "Will you follow the teaching of the Lord Buddha and live so far as you can the life He recommends a man to live?" Any follower of any other religion might say: "The teaching is a good teaching, I will follow it" and thereby become a Buddhist by undertaking to live according to that teaching. So there is in that no resigning of any other faith; one must learn to understand them both. One would say, perhaps, that if we can put the truth from the standpoint of Unity, instead of from that of separateness, we shall then be ideal Theosophists in that respect, because that is what we are trying to do. The truth lies behind all these religions. That is a commonplace, but it lies a long way behind some of them. It is successfully concealed in the presentation. We are trying to study that truth which lies behind, and so we put our statement from the standpoint of that truth, and in that way we can help the people who only know the initial statement. Then we can see the good in all and we can help all, but it needs that we understand first. That is why we study Comparative Religion, not only that we can see that the Theosophical truths do appear in all religions, but also that we may understand the different presentations of them and be able to talk about them along

their own lines. You will notice, any of you who have been on lecturing tours, how wonderfully our President does that. In India she speaks as a Hindu to them. She quotes from their Scriptures in support of everything she says; she uses some of their own Samskrit Texts, and that appeals to them just as the rolling Latin appeals to the Roman Catholics. When she speaks to the Buddhists she says the very same things; but she quotes the sayings of the Lord Buddha, she uses their terminology and she speaks as a Buddhist. If you go to England, you will hear her speak as a Christian to Christians—not in any sense of the word changing her real belief or religion, but simply speaking their language. It would be just as ineffective and feeble to talk to a Buddhist in Hindu terms, or to a Christian in Buddhist terms, as to go over to Paris and deliver a lecture in English to an audience who know only French. So Theosophists who will talk in long Samskrit terms often do their propaganda harm instead of good; people think it is all strange and vague and impossible. If you are speaking to English people, it is better on the whole to confine yourself to that language and not to use Samskrit terms, unless you are absolutely obliged. It is exactly on the same principle that, when the President speaks to people of the Parsi religion, you will hear her quoting from the *Zend-Avesta* and using the language of Zoroaster. That is their way and you must approach them along their

lines. In order to do that you must understand all these things as she understands them. That sounds rather hopeless to the average lecturer. It is not nearly so hopeless as it seems. I have not studied these religions to anything like the extent she has done, but yet a very slight glance at a primer of the religions enables you to present the facts in their guise, because you know Theosophy. I have heard Colonel Olcott do that again and again. He was not a man who had studied very deeply, he was not a metaphysician or anything of that sort, but he was an exceedingly good practical lecturer. I have heard him speak to an audience of Hindus; I have heard him speak to Parsis; I have heard him speak to Buddhists—he was himself a Buddhist—and the priests and learned men of all these faiths agreed in saying that a new light had been given them on their own teaching, and that, remember, by a man who had not made a special study of their religions. That shows you how Theosophy is the master-key. You may know Theosophy as Colonel Olcott knew it, and that knowledge will enable you to interpret much that is dark and mysterious in all the varying presentations of the truth. So we need study only the truth that lies behind them all, and then a few words of the language of each of them, and at once we will see what it all means.

4. *Cheerfulness.*—Then we come to another of these qualifications. We are still in the third

qualification, but dealing with the various points, and the fourth of these is Cheerfulness.

> You must bear your karma cheerfully, whatever it may be, taking it as an honour that suffering comes to you, because it shows that the Lords of Karma think you worth helping.

Cheerfulness: This qualification is often called Endurance. Mrs. Besant has often used that word for it, but this goes a little further than mere endurance. Many people can endure, generally because they have to, but they endure sadly, mournfully, not making the best of things. We are expected to endure cheerfully, and that is a distinctly further step. You must notice also this other expression: "It shows that the Lords of Karma think you worth helping."

It is not easy to keep the idea of the working of karma clear in our minds. There are pitfalls on each side, and one must be rather careful. It is a sort of razor edge of which you have, on the one side, the idea that it is a personal Providence which is dispensing the thing. Christians have come along that line, and have in their very blood the idea of a personal Providence always interfering. But that is an incorrect idea and will lead you very wrong. And yet if you make the thing merely an impersonal law, on the other hand, there are certain implications and adaptations which you will fail to understand. There are many books written on the subject. One of the very best, I think, is *A Study in Karma* which the President has published. Putting the matter quite

roughly and with various reservations, you should first make it quite clear to yourselves that karma is a law like the law of gravitation, and that it is always acting. People think of it and speak of it as though it came into operation only when you do something, the fact being that you merely come under its operation at that moment. The law of gravitation is acting all the while. If I drop this book, you have an example of the law. You must remember that this law of karma is not a thing that comes into operation every now and then only. It is there all the time. So if you take electricity, there are electric forces always in activity round about us; but if you want these electric forces to do something for you—to light your city, or to drive your trams—then you must provide the necessary conditions through which they can work. In the same way you provide the conditions in which the law of karma can act upon you, when you do or think or speak some definite thing. For example, as an ego you are floating on your own plane between incarnations, and the law of karma is doing nothing to you at such times. But when you put yourself down into incarnation, by that fact of taking birth you bring yourself under karma, you set it in motion as it concerns you, and so it immediately carries you into some particular birth. The law was operating all the while; it has not commenced to work because you have come within its purview. But since you

have come there and set the thing in motion, it acts.

Now with what part of that have the Lords of Karma to do? You must regard the Lords of Karma simply as the Administrators of a Law. In some ways perhaps the word "Lords" is a little indefinite, because it does rather suggest that they direct and rule Karma. You cannot direct and rule gravitation, just as you cannot direct and rule electricity. But you can make arrangements that it shall come into operation at certain places and do certain things. You can apply it at this point and not at that. So with the law of karma. Those who are working in connection with the law of karma are its Administrators. They watch, for example, the action of the karma and they decide exactly what the next birth shall be. It is difficult to put the facts without on one side or the other deceiving people, because people think so much more than the mere words one says; they read into them so much more than is meant. The law of karma, for each one of you at this moment, has an account stored up, not necessarily against you—this account representing the sum of your good and bad deeds. The whole of that sum is the pressure of the law of karma upon you, but if all that came upon you at a given moment, let us say, and if the evil should largely exceed the good (on the whole there is a tendency for there to be a certain excess of evil karma, because we have all

come up through savage levels when we did all sorts of uncontrolled things, therefore we have all behind us a certain amount of evil karma, unless we have spent many lives working it out, and that means lives of considerable suffering); so when you find a life of suffering coming upon you the best way is to assume that you are working out the last part of it. Read the stories of the greatest of the saints, and you will find they have passed through an immense amount of suffering. All the people who have tried to help the world have suffered terribly. It is part of the training of their Initiation; but it is absolute justice always, for not even for the purposes of training can any injustice take place. It is because they are clearing up the remains of their karma and clearing it up very rapidly. They are getting more than their natural share of suffering. What part then is the share of the Lords of Karma in the matter? It is to interfere with the pressure of the whole of the karma, to mete out a certain part and to give it to you to work out in one life. That is Their duty, but They are not responsible for all your foolishness afterwards, for the fact that you take things very badly, instead of philosophically, and thereby intensify your own suffering. They are not responsible for that. That is your karma and your own wrong doing, but the wrong doing and the amount of good fortune apportioned to a particular life in Their selection from the mass that lies behind. That is done by the

Four Maharajas and Their agents. So They decide for you what your next life shall be, but They decide it under the law. They cannot take more of good or more of evil than there is in your karma, but they do select from that what they think you can work through. If you work through the evil sooner than They expected, if one may say so—I do not know how far They are omniscient, I could not say—but if you work through the evil allotted to you, then they give you more. "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth"—that is the meaning of that extraordinary expression. It is the very highest compliment They can pay you.

You know among yourselves, perhaps in a small way, how karma from the past hinders you in your work. Now you all desire to do something for the Theosophical Society. Well, do you not often find yourself hindered by ill-health or weakness or something? That is karma of the Past. Do you not see how much more you would be able to do if you were perfectly free from that, if there were no weakness, no ill-health, no limitations? Some of you find your time taken up because you have come along the line that makes that necessary for the moment. But if you had worked through all your karma, you would have available the whole of your time, the whole of your strength. You see how much more use you would be to the Masters, if that were so. That is why it is so necessary that karma should be worked off as

soon as possible, and the greatest compliment the Lords of Karma can pay you is to give you more to bear, for it shows that They "think you worth helping".

Then He says:

> However hard it is, be thankful that it is no worse.

That is always a line of consolation that you can take. It might have been worse, and it is well that you should think of that. It sounds a sort of commonplace, but the tendency of every one who suffers is to say how hard it is, and to think of other times when things were better. We might just as well take it the other way and say: "Things might have been much worse than this," and also: "I am very glad to be working off all this karma. I might have had much more to work out, at least let me make the best of it." Some changes intensify the working of karma. For example, to be accepted as a pupil intensifies the working of karma. Whenever any of you makes an offer of himself to the Master, the very offer is such a change as I have mentioned. It does intensify the working of karma. If the Master accepts you and draws you closer to Him, that again is another cause. It is by your own will that you offer yourself, and so it amounts to an invitation to the Lords of Karma to do what they can for you to carry you forward; and if your wish is a real wish, you need not be surprised that results

should come. So often people are. They work and work at a thing, and then they are very much surprised when what they are working for really comes to pass. It is the same with meditation. They practise it for a long time in order to obtain certain results; at last they slip out of their bodies and they are dreadfully frightened, but it is a thing which they have been trying to do. So you offer yourself to the Master in all goodwill; and when some suffering comes suddenly upon you which shows that that offer has been partially accepted, you are very much surprised and rather hurt.

You remember the series of "Lives of Alcyone" published in *The Theosophist.* Look at them and see what terrible troubles came to Alcyone, and through how much difficulty he passed. He was executed at one time for a murder that he had not committed. In several other cases frightful suffering of different kinds came to him. He lost his son, his daughter, once or twice, under terrible circumstances. All kinds of things happened to him, quite terrible things; yet, if you read the "Lives," you will not see anything particular in them that seems to justify that. No, but these are the last few lives leading up to a culmination, and therefore there must be in them the working out of all that remains, and often it seems a great deal of suffering. It was one of the advantages of that series of "Lives" (they were good stories, no doubt, but it was not to gratify personal curiosity

that they were published, but for the lessons which they afforded in reincarnation and karma) that they teach that a good deal of suffering is almost a necessity when the goal is drawing near, and that this is not in the least because suffering, as such, is necessary, but merely because the person in question has brought it on himself. If we had always gone right, if we had always taken the right path, there would be no karma to suffer. But no one does that, and consequently to clear up all that is left does mean a good deal of sorrow. So many things that the world calls evil and suffering may just be signs of good progress. Moreover, instead of sympathising with you, people often blame you; that is generally the best karma of all—the being misunderstood, so that your good shall be evil spoken of. That is a thing which seems to come always when people are drawing near to their final goal. You know how it has happened to our President, how it has happened to every occult or mystical teacher all through history. In many ways, as I say, it is perhaps the best karma of all. You can see that now as I say it, but you may remember it when the time comes, when that particular trouble comes to you, when people misunderstand you and accuse you of doing all sorts of evil things, when you know all the time that your intention is entirely good. That is the thing to remember when the trouble comes—that it is a good sign; that it is to be expected; that it has come to

many others besides yourself. If you can remember that at the right time, then you can help others who are less fortunate. Remember how much there is for which you should be grateful—that is the best way to take these things. But the difficulty is to remember it when the trouble comes. When you think it over now, and apply it to somebody else, it is easy enough; but to remember it when it comes to yourself—well, to do that you need to be a Theosophist indeed. But after all that is what we are trying to be and it is for that that we are in the Society.

XXI

May 25, 1915.

WE are on the fiftieth page and were speaking of the fourth point of Conduct—*Cheerfulness*. Continuing, the Master says:

> Remember that you are of but little use to the Master until your evil karma is worked out, and you are free.

That is clearly a point which we ought to remember and it will certainly be a great comfort to us when Karma brings suffering upon us. Remember that the Master is hampered in His work by our bad karma, and that therefore, in getting rid of the bad karma, we are making ourselves more fit to serve Him. I know that Madame Blavatsky took that view very strongly with regard to the Coulomb affair and the attacks made upon her in the year 1884, or thereabouts. While she was indignant that the attacks should be made, and at the ingratitude which they showed, and while she was disturbed lest they should reflect upon her Society and injure it, she said: "Well, at least there is this, that all these troubles make me more fit to serve Him." She used to hint sometimes vaguely at some mistake that she had made in the past—I presume in a previous life,

perhaps in the life before last. Of course we never asked about that. We never thought it was our business in any way, but several times she did hint at something of that nature as a kind of explanation of all the trouble and suffering that came upon her. I know nothing more than what she said, but she seemed to regard it all in that way as the payment of a debt, and took it very cheerfully.

Certainly the same thing is true of the Society as a whole. It has passed through various troubles. That Coulomb affair reacted very much on the Society of that time, as also did the great Judge trouble which came eleven years later, and likewise the trouble about myself, which arose again eleven years after that. Each of those was a sad affair for the Society. In each case we lost some members whom many of us loved, whom we did not in the least wish to lose, whom we felt we could ill afford to lose. Yet in every case, after each of these troubles, the Society leapt forward again, and certainly on the whole was the better for it—not immediately, but soon afterwards. Apparently those who left us had gone as far as they could. Madame Blavatsky spoke of some people, who were very good and helpful for a time, as presently becoming dead weights in the Society. She told us that when people had reached their "saturation point for truth," as she called it, when they had gone as far as they usefully could go in that life, they were sometimes unable to bear the idea that the

Society could go on without them, that it could go on in a way that they could not fully grasp or understand, and so they actually became hindrances, though they had previously been great helps. She herself spoke of that, and certainly there is truth in it. It is trouble that weeds out those who have reached that stage. As I have said, the rest of us were often very sorry to lose these people. They were friends whom we had loved, but it would appear that, as far as the Society was concerned, they had done their work. I know that was so in this last trouble that rose about nine years ago. It seemed to me, I being to some extent the centre of the storm centre, that there was great excuse for many of the people who misunderstood, that it was a very hard test to set them, and I represented that as well as I could to some of the Greater People behind—to the Official, in fact, before whom all deviations from the normal have to come. He is called in the books the Maha-Chohan. It was a very daring thing to do, of course, to ask for an extension—to ask for an act of grace from such an Official as that. Naturally enough, He rather smiled at me, because it was presumptuous on my part; and when I said that it seemed to me that the test had been very severe, that it was not unreasonable that many should have failed to come through it, He gave a short laugh. He said: "Will you be satisfied if the same people throw aside your President, Mrs. Besant?" "Oh yes," I

said, " of course," because I felt sure they would not do that. But in a few months they did. They did throw her overboard also, and rose against her, and then He said with the same gentle smile: " You see, for this life their sun has set," which I thought was a very striking expression. Then He went on: " But there are other lives, and the sun will rise again to-morrow." So He was right. Of course They always are, you know, and I was wrong to think the thing was too hard, because when something infinitely easier was given to them they went the same way, showing, as Madame Blavatsky puts it, that the Society had grown a little beyond them. Perhaps some leading members come to think of themselves as necessary. Now, of course, that is a fatal attitude. It is very often quite true. We know it well especially in India. A Branch in India often does centre round one of its members; and as in India many of the members are Government officials and are constantly being transferred from place to place, we have the proof of it; because a Lodge in one town will suddenly become much less active than it was, and then we find that this is because a certain person has been transferred to another place, and in that other town the Lodge will spring into far greater activity because of his personality. Yet though that is so, and although it is impossible to overestimate the influence of a powerful personality, no one is indispensable in a movement like this. I suppose you can hardly

imagine now what we felt when Madame Blavatsky left us and gave up her body. It seemed to us that the Society would hardly continue. We could not imagine, having been used to daily inspiration from her, how we could get along, and yet somehow or other we did. It is true that another great individuality arose in the person of our present President. You know how it is with us now, how we all feel—at least I myself do—that, when she changes her body, it will be a loss which cannot possibly be repaired, because there is only one Mrs. Besant. And yet I am sure she would be the first to tell you that the Society will go on—she would probably say, go on just as well. I myself find it very difficult to believe that. But that it will go on and do its work, I am sure, because, after all, although the instruments change their bodies, although "in the sight of the unwise they seem to die," the Masters who stand behind do not die, and while They are there, some will be found to carry on the work for Them.

So the various troubles that have come over the Society have certainly been good for the Society. In this way the corporate life of the Society is something like the individual life of each of its members. It works out its karma and is the better for having worked it out. It has been very remarkable in the Society, that each of these troubles, which at the time seemed a very terrible and crushing affair, has

been followed by a strong forward movement. So He says:

> By offering yourself to Him, you have asked that your Karma may be hurried.

You see that is the idea. You offer yourself to the Master; and when you thus offer yourself, it ought to be in the same whole-hearted spirit that you would give any other gift. You give yourself. You ought not to want to take back any part of it, or make a reservation as to how it should be used. People talk of giving themselves to the Master, and are afraid that the Master will ask too much of them. That is the spirit of Ananias and Sapphira—the spirit that gave, but did not give everything. Mind, that unfortunate couple had assuredly the most perfect right to retain part of their goods for themselves if they wished to do so. The mistake they made was that they pretended that they were giving everything without actually doing so. So if there be those among us who say: "I can give this much of myself, only, but I cannot give myself unreservedly," that, after all, is a stage through which you must pass. But if you can give yourself you should not wish to take back that gift, and you should not wish to keep a check as to how it should be used. You give yourself altogether. You need have no fear that He will want too much from you.

So He says, because of that: "In one or two lives you work through what otherwise might have been

spread over a hundred." That is a useful thought. People grumble about the amount of suffering that comes upon them. They wonder why, and say that they have not deserved it. This is true, according to any ordinary canons. Their life must have been a reasonably good life, for such an opportunity does not come to a person who has not lived reasonably well; but by the very offering of themselves to a Master they have asked that this karma may be hurried and the immediate result is that, instead of getting the amount of suffering or trouble that would naturally belong to one life, they get the trouble of ten lives, or even more than that, concentrated into one. He says:

So now in one or two lives you work through what otherwise might have been spread over a hundred.

That is a very large compression as it were, and it means that a great deal more than the ordinary amount of trouble is quite likely to come. I think it has been the experience of most of us that it does come, and that we do get abnormal karma in many ways. It is not for us to grumble at it; it is the very sign that our offer has been accepted. We ought to rejoice in it, if we only understood it. " But in order to make the best of it, you must bear it cheerfully, gladly," because by so doing you can make good karma for the future, and you may very easily make bad karma in the bearing of suffering if you do not take it in the right way. If you grumble and make

it greater than it is, by magnifying it and talking it over and thinking too much about it, you are laying up further evil karma. You should bear it cheerfully, for that in itself is the making of good karma, and you are hastening the development of good qualities in yourself, patience, perseverance, long-suffering, determination and so on. So you see that out of evil long past you make an absolute benefit for yourself.

> Yet another point. You must give up all feeling of possession. Karma may take from you the things that you like best—even the people you love most. Even then you must be cheerful—ready to part with anything and everything.

That is especially the meaning of the word which the Master has translated " Cheerfulness," or rather which He has substituted for the word " *Titiksha*," the readiness to give up anything in the world, that is the meaning which used to be insisted upon most strongly. He says, you must not have any feeling of possession. It is very difficult, because we have been brought up along that line. These races have been emphasising the individuality. Well, all evolution has been building up this individuality and perhaps rather especially in the Anglo-Saxon races, where we have been emphasising the lower mind and the discrimination between this and that, and therefore between mine and thine very strongly. It gives us this strong sense of possession. We say: " This is my money; this is my property; the influence which I get is mine, for me to use for my own advantage." Yes,

but then you see that is precisely one of the ideas which, as a student of Occultism, you must put away. You must realise that nothing is yours in that personal sense, that whatever is yours is given you in trust for the work of evolution. The work of evolution is the one consideration. If you have money, well and good—it is good karma, because it gives you the opportunity of doing more for the work with that. If you are in a position where you have influence, well and good, because you have been entrusted with that as a talent which you can use in the Master's service. And so we come to feel that nothing is our own in the sense of a separate use of it ; that we are always in the position of the trusted manager or employee who is using the firm's money, but is in every respect just as careful with every penny of it as if it were his own. It is his to use ; he has unquestioned power over it, but he is careful to the last degree to make the best possible use of it, and he could never have the feeling that it was his own personal property. That should be the position of every rich man, of every man in a position of power. We know how often in this world's history it has gone the other way, how people who have gained position and power have used it selfishly. But that is their mistake. The man who does that, however able he may be, is failing in the trust. The power was given to him to use on behalf of humanity, and he is using it for his

personal self—a very poor thing to do, a distinct malversation.

One must learn this attitude of regarding oneself as a unit of humanity. You see that very wonderfully, very beautifully, with our Masters; how they regard Themselves merely as stewards of mighty powers which They possess. That is why it is said that the Master makes no karma. So long as you are thinking of yourself and putting forth any energy—no matter how good the energy may be—with the thought of self, then the karma, good though it may be, binds you to life, just as surely as bad karma would bind you to life, because you have done it for yourself. But if you can do all your good deeds without a single thought of self, thinking only of humanity as doing them through you, the karma comes to humanity as a whole. That is precisely how it happens that Those Who are the Greatest of Actors and Performers, yet make no karma that binds Them, because They do it all impersonally. They do it all as a soldier fights in battle—with no thought of the particular enemy whom he happens to kill, but simply the feeling that he is working for a cause, as a part of a mighty machine. Therefore They work as part of the Great Brotherhood, as part of the Hierarchy, part of humanity, and the karma comes back to humanity, and helps to uplift it, which is Their object. That is what we must try to do. First you see, you must have no sense of possession about things,—or about

people, which is harder still. The Master says: "Karma may take from you the things you like best —even the people whom you love most." The idea is partly that they may be taken from you by death, as it is called, but also that they may be taken from you in the sense of going out for service. Of how many thousands is that true now—that the wife is giving her husband, that the mother is giving her son, to go forth for the right in the service of the country. Thousands upon thousands of people are giving with the utmost freedom that which they love most. Surely it is not for us ever to hesitate to do as well in our Master's service as so many thousands of others have done in the service of the nation.

Of course it is difficult to let a life go out of yours which is more to you than your own life, and yet you know, in connection with this Theosophical movement, many have had to do that, some under very sad circumstances, others under circumstances which make the sacrifice holy and beautiful. In many cases it has happened even as Christ said of Himself: "I come not to bring peace, but a sword"—to set various people against one another, meaning, of course, that His teaching would be taken up here and there by one in a family and not by others, that it would cause division. Theosophy has done that too. Again and again there have been cases where one member of a family has seen the Theosophical Truth because he had met with it in other lives long ago,

while the rest of the family have not seen it and have gone on in their own way. It has meant suffering, division, trouble. In this way Theosophy seems at the time to cause division, and it has often happened that a member, for the sake of his belief, has had to give up the nearest and the closest relation with those whom he loved most dearly, because they have been unable to follow him into his newer and wider life. For the sake of Theosophy many of us have had to give up those whom we love; and yet also for the sake of Theosophy that also is well, but it is not easy. It is the last and most difficult test of our devotion to the Master—to be willing to yield to His service that for which we have had a deep and unselfish love.

Remember the difficulty that King Suddhodana found, when his son, the Prince Siddartha, wished to devote Himself to the religious life and the search for truth, and how the king spent vast sums of money and a great part of his life in endeavouring to keep back his son from the high fate that opened before him, endeavouring to make him, instead of the greatest religious teacher the world has ever known, the greatest king in India, which was the future the astrologers had foretold for him—a king who would rule the whole of India even as certain others had once or twice done. The king preferred that to the alternative of being the greatest religious teacher the world had ever had, because he knew that to be a

religious teacher meant poverty and self-abnegation. And yet that turned out to be a higher position in reality than that of any king. There have been several rajas who have ruled over the whole of India—I doubt very much whether any of you know the name of one of those kings, and practically not a person in the whole of this city would know them. But I am quite certain there is not a person among you, nor indeed in this great city, who has not heard of the Lord Buddha. It is not the great king whose name goes down longest and furthest in history, but the greatest religious teacher. King Suddhodana wished enormous power and fame without parallel for his son, and he has had it, but not in the way that he wished or expected it. The power of the Lord Buddha is greater than that of any earthly monarch, and His renown has spread all over the world. The more that men know of Occultism, the greater is their reverence for that Mighty Person, and so is it in many other cases. We seek, for those whom we love, that which we have had ourselves, that which we know; and yet there may be greater things which have not come to us, and which may be in their karma, just as was the case with King Suddhodana. Yet it is the last and most difficult test.

How must you take these trials? Even then the Master says you must be cheerful, ready to part with anything and everything. In the darker forms of magic they escape, or try to escape such pain and

suffering as that by killing out love from the heart. Remember how a sword pierced the heart of Our Lady Herself, the Blessed Virgin Mary. She might have escaped that sword, you can see, if she had chosen to tear out from her heart all remembrance of her Son and forget Him altogether. That is the method adopted by the people of the darker magic. They cast out love and so they do not suffer. But that is the darker magic—and is not for any who follow the Great Brotherhood, for there the love becomes even stronger. But it becomes, at the same time, selfless love, so that the thought of the Master and His work is that which is loved most of all, and that to which everything else must give way. You do not kill out the love, but you kill out the selfishness in the love, and that is not always easy. Remember how the Christ Himself spoke to the people. He said to them, "Forsake all and follow Me." Now when you read that, or when our Christian friends read that in the Gospel, of course they all feel they would have done it at once. It is not so certain. Think of it—put yourself, if you can, into the place of the people of that time. Remember the young man who came to Him, who had great possessions and riches. He did not forsake all and follow Christ. He was sorrowful about it. He could not because he had great possessions. Probably these possessions brought their duties which he felt he had to perform. In any case would you have been so sure to do it?

Remember that all the accepted feeling of the time, all the respectability and the orthodox powers—the Pharisees and the Sadducees—were arrayed against the Christ. He was only a poor wandering Teacher, who had not where to lay His Head. Would you have followed Him in defiance of all respectability—when all the people whom you had been respecting all your life—the Great Elders, the High Priests—the people corresponding to Bishops and Archbishops, when they had all pronounced against Him? Is it so certain that you would have forsaken everything to follow Him, whom all these orthodox people stigmatised as a charlatan? Would you not have felt a doubt, after all, whether He was not a fanatic, whether, after all, you might not be throwing away the substance and grasping at the shadow? It is not so certain. Think how it must have looked. In the present day perhaps it looks like that still, and yet those of us who have thrown away other things for the sake of following Them have never for one moment regretted it. It was a test for the people in Christ's day. There is no doubt that it is a test for people now as to whether they shall really follow the Master utterly. The occasion comes to you sometimes. You know that a question sometimes arises within yourself as to whether you should do some certain thing which seems in every way the best and wisest thing to do from the point of common-sense, but which you feel inside would not be quite what the Master expects of

you, would not be quite the highest and best thing to do. That is just such a test. Once more are you really going to follow Him, really going to do what He expects of you, or are you keeping back part of the price? It is a serious test. We could never dream of despising those who cannot pass so severe a test as that. If we find ourselves able to pass it, let us be humbly, heartily thankful but never for a moment let us blame the man who does not see his way to do so, because it is a hard thing, a very hard thing.

> Often the Master needs to pour out His strength upon others through His servant; He cannot do that if His servant yields to depression. So cheerfulness must be the rule.

You see how constantly all through this book the same reason is brought forward for everything that has to be done,—namely, the service of the Master. Here again the Master can use you. You may expect a dozen reasons to be given against depression. It is bad for you, it has an unpleasant effect upon others around you, but the one point which is emphasised here is that the Master cannot use you, if you yield to depression. Therefore you must not be depressed. Always this noble, this elevating thought: you can help, you can be made use of, you can share in the Master's work. He needs your help, and in order to help, you must be all joy and cheerfulness. His force is all joy, because it is part of the Divine Force,

and God is Love and Glory and Beauty, not depression or gloominess or hatred.

Then we come to another of the six points of Good Conduct, that which is called One-Pointedness.

5. *One-Pointedness* :

> The one thing that you must set before you is to do the Master's work. Whatever else may come in your way to do, that at least you must never forget. Yet nothing else *can* come in your way, for all helpful, unselfish work is the Master's work, and you must do it for His sake.

Well, we know that in ordinary life one-pointedness is necessary to success. The one-pointed man always wins in the end. I suppose there is practically nothing that a man cannot get if he wills strongly enough, and works for it definitely enough. In ordinary everyday life you see it, you know. The man who has made up his mind with firm determination to save money, or to make money, does it in time. The man who sets himself to reach a particular point gets there in time, if only his will is strong enough. If he can do it even in ordinary worldly matters very much more so can he do it in the case of spiritual things. To will strongly enough is certainly to have. If you set your mind to reach a point you will reach it. But you must be one-pointed. You must be willing to put aside all other things in order that you may get it.

It is said here that all good work is the Master's work, so that you can do everything from that point

of view. It would be useful if in the ordinary daily work you would just set yourselves to see in what the work you are doing is the Master's work, to see wherein lies its helpfulness. Suppose you are earning money to support your wife and family—is that the Master's work? Yes, it is the Master's work. You are put by karma into that position. You have taken upon yourself certain responsibilities, you are not free to do the Master's work until those responsibilities have been met, until you have done that which is necessary for you to do, and in the very doing of that you are providing no doubt for your wife and children, but you are raising up others who will work for the Master. You are making it possible that they in their turn shall carry on the work. In very many cases the helpfulness of the work consists in preparing yourself to do greater work. Take the case of a schoolboy. He might say, "Well, I am going to school, I am learning all these things, in many cases I do not see the use of the particular things I have to learn." No, but it all goes to the building up of the character, or of a certain amount of knowledge, a body of knowledge. There are certain things, you know, which a boy learns at school, which are not in the least of use to him, but are given to him to develop his mental faculties. Dead languages like Greek and Latin, and things like geography are of little use to most boys; but the reason they are taught, we are told, is to develop

the mentality of the child. So in the same way a boy might say: "Well, I do not want to waste time in doing physical culture exercises. Why should I do that, instead of cultivating my mind?" And one would answer: "Just because you have a physical body and, unless your body is trained and strengthened, your mind will not be strong, and you will not be able to do the best work." So a good deal of his work consists in just preparing himself for other work. It is not that he is actually doing the work, but he is preparing himself to be able to do it. That happens to many of us, because we are, in many cases, only children in regard to the higher life. Consequently many of the duties that come in our way may be taken as being designed to develop qualities within us which we shall presently be able to use in the Master's service. That being so, the development of these qualities is also His service, just as much as the actual work; for without such preparation we should be unable to do it. Everything is for Him. Whether you are preparing yourself, whether you are working nominally for wife and children, whether you are working for your country, or directly for some particular object, yet all work is for Him. Remember, if we are His, it could not be for anyone else. How should it be? If, then, you make this your normal attitude—that you are doing everything for Him—you make an atmosphere in which this one-pointedness can grow. If you are making money, it

is made to be used in the service of humanity. If you are gaining for yourself position and power, it is that you may use it for His sake. Take care that you do not deceive yourself, take care that it is not a pretence, and that behind it you are not cloaking some feeling of selfish delight in the power, in the money.

In so far as there is anything selfish, to that extent the thing is less perfect as an offering. But if any of these things are being sought solely for Him and solely for His service, then the work entailed in seeking them is good work—work upon which His blessing may rest. Then He says:

> That same Teacher also wrote: "Whatsoever ye do, do it *heartily* as to the Lord, and not unto men." Think how you would do a piece of work if you knew that the Master was coming at once to look at it. Just in that way you must do all your work. Those who know most will most know all that that verse means.

Many of you know the inner meaning of the verse. When S. Paul wrote it, I presume he was thinking—nay, as an Initiate he was probably thinking—of that of which it reminds us, but the average Christian who reads it will think of it as referring to God. It is said that you should do your work as though a Master were coming to look at it. Those of you who have read of the great Initiations, will know that the whole world exists in the aura of the Lord of the World, of the One Initiator, and that therefore everything that you do is being done actually in His Presence, within His consciousness, so that He is

not so much coming to look at it presently, as actually conscious of it here and now. Why does He see it ? Because it is actually within His aura. The text says : " In Him we live and move and have our being." That is literally true. It is not a religious fiction, a poetic fancy, but a scientific fact that we live within the aura of the Great Spiritual King of the world, and that within His consciousness lies every act that is done, every thought that crosses our minds. Of course a consciousness that can grasp all that simultaneously is inconceivably incomprehensible, but then you must also remember that a God whom we could comprehend would be at about our own level. The Great King is quite infinitely greater than we as yet, though in the far distant future each of us will reach even that stupendous level. Remember that the thing is actually so—" of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things ". And so you may well do what you have to do as well as you can, because it is absolutely true that He is present in everything, and that in Him all this is actually taking place. I know that to some people this seems a rather terrible thought, that the old conception of God made it a terrible thought, because God was supposed to be One who was always, as it were, watching to find fault, watching for anything like a breach of His laws. Many a child has suffered much, I think, because of the thought that God sees everything that he does, that nothing can be hidden

from Him. He feels it a sort of unfair advantage to take, that there can be no privacy. But if, instead of that, you realise the Mighty Divine Love, then you begin to see that He is your safety and your greatest blessing. If you go up to heaven He is there; if you go down to hell He is there also; and if you take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost part of the sea even there shall His Hand lead us and His Right Hand uphold us. Remember that there can be nothing that is not in His consciousness; yet that mighty Consciousness is so mighty a Love, that none who understands could ever feel aught but profound reverence and joy in the certainty that the protection of that all-encompassing Love can never forsake him.

XXII

June 4, 1915.

> One-pointedness means, too, that nothing shall ever turn you, even for a moment, from the Path upon which you have entered. No temptations, no worldly pleasures, no worldly affections even, must ever draw you aside. For you yourself must become one with the Path; it must be so much part of your nature that you follow it without needing to think of it, and cannot turn aside. You, the Monad, have decided it; to break away from it would be to break away from yourself.

That statement, that you must become one with the Path, is made, you know, in other Scriptures besides this. You remember how the Christ said to His Disciples: "I am the way," and how Shri Krishna made a very similar observation; He said: "I am the way along which the traveller must walk." You find the same idea put before you also in *Light on the Path.* In order to understand that, you must go back to the idea of the Monad, and realise that the Monad is you. It is difficult to realise; most people cannot even realise that the ego is themselves. You know how habitually they talk about "my soul," as though the real man was the body, and the soul some kind of possession. The first thing we have to teach

them is that man is a soul and the body belongs to that soul. They do not realise that; they go on thinking, "I am angry, I am tired, I am jealous." You are none of these things. You, the soul, could never be angry or jealous. The soul is not so foolish, but the lower vehicles—yes, to any extent. The first Initiation consists in making the lower vehicles the channels of the higher life, so that, for him who has passed that, it shall not be really possible to think from the lower level, to think as a personality. He might do so once or twice from mere habit, but he would always in a moment know: "That is wrong; I am forgetting my birth-right; I am doing that which belongs to a previous stage." He would think about everything from the standpoint of the ego, the Real Man within. That is what is meant by the union of the higher and the lower self. Yet that is a misleading phrase, because it treats them as though they were two; the truth being that the lower self is only a fragmentary manifestation of the higher which thinks of itself as separate. As soon as it gets away from that mistake and realises that it is only an expression of the higher, then the higher can take command and work through the lower. That means readiness for the first Initiation. Readiness for the fifth Initiation means that the same thing has been done with regard to the Monad and the ego—that the ego in turn realises that he is only a fragmentary representation of the Monad—that the

Monad is the real self. I suppose perhaps, though that is only speculation, that there will come another point much further on in our evolution, when we shall learn with equal certainty that not even the Monad, but that the Logos, who stands behind, is the true self. " I am that Self, that Self am I." You have to realise that; it is easy to say, but to realise it is very difficult. However, you must at least intellectually grasp the thought that you are the Monad and that all these lower desires are not your will at all. Your will is always to grow spiritually. You should be like the needle of the compass; you may be swayed a little here and there by external influences, but you always come back and point to the pole. Matter is your instrument, it is absurd to give way to the instincts, feelings and desires of a piece of material which you have picked up to fashion for your own use, yet that is all the body is. People yield themselves to this thing and let it master them. Of course this should not be. It is as though, for example, when you were using a hammer, the hammer struck where it chose, instead of where you intended. It is exactly like that. Your body exists because you made it, because you drew it round you. It should have no separate existence of any sort whatever. You must mould it into an expression of you. After that you will mould it into a perfect expression of the Monad. At present the Monad very rarely interferes with us down here. Remember that we know

very little about the Monad. None of us who write can reach the Monadic level. We can see Him in His first manifestation, but not on His own plane. The Adept can meet Him on His own plane, but we can only theorise as to what His consciousness is, as to how much He knows, to put it plainly, of what we are doing down here. It may be that it is hardly worth His while to consider the matter as yet. You see how the thing is:—in order to gain the experience of all the planes He puts a part of Himself (that is misleading again, because it makes Him seem separable; we must use words limited by our own knowledge and our own power of thought to express these higher things, and I think this on the whole is less deceptive, less liable to mistake) He puts down part of Himself, the ego. He does not seem to be able to get down lower than the top of the mental plane. Then that ego repeats the action, and puts part of itself down, which becomes our personality, so that we are very much a fragment of a fragment, and a very poor expression of the higher. The Monad throws that down to work. He cannot, I imagine, (we are speaking here without perfect knowledge) do much with it. He puts it down and overshadows it, throws influence on to it rather than into it. The ego of a savage is practically not there, so far as any influence over the bodies goes. The only thing is that, but for the ego, the savage could not be there. But as an expression of the ego he is a failure,

and for quite a long time the ego can practically do nothing. So far as I can see, from the observation of the action of egos (here we are on our own ground, where we can see), in the case of the savage he remains in a condition of happiness at his own level and does not try, because it is useless to try, to do anything particular with the personality. He lets that slowly grow ; and when there is a sign of anything that can be acted upon, at once he acts upon it. But he is really more brooding over it than in touch with it. But as soon as the savage personality comes into more civilised life, then he begins to try to influence it. But even then one gets the impression that he is, so to speak, easily discouraged. He tries to influence his bodies during youth, but generally the personality contrives to go pretty badly wrong, and in quite a number of cases it seems to slip quite out of hand ; and when that happens, he appears to be able to do very little more with it. Apparently he sits back in the hope of being able to do better next life. He tries to do his best with the thing, and, when he sees he cannot do more, he will sometimes yield up such a body because he cannot do anything with it. But in many cases he lets it run through its ordinary course and work out a certain amount of karma.

When we get on to civilised races and to the level of the cultured people about us, then the ego begins to try to take a hand determinedly. I mean, he decidedly tries every time, with a new physical body,

to get control of it as much as he can. He, as it were, struggles with the elemental made by the Karmic Deities and tries to improve matters, and more or less through life he keeps trying to influence it. He has built something for it that we call conscience, you know, and through that he tries to work.

Among yourselves, here, he must be keenly awake, trying to influence you. You must encourage that, you see, because it is the real You for the moment. But the Monad,—who lies many planes further back still—is not doing anything at all. He is simply leaving the work to the ego, because it is the ego's work, but as soon as you get the definite junction between the ego and the lower vehicles, that man is ready for Initiation. Then the Monad begins to come into play, then He begins to wake up. Remember that He is the God in man, His influence is the Divine influence, but it is practically only then that He begins to use that influence and even then it will only be but a slight influence, for a considerable time. I suppose that sometimes there are very special occasions when He intervenes as in the "Lives of Alcyone," when Alcyone, in the presence of the Lord Gautama Buddha made the vow himself to become a Buddha. That was the Monad. The Monad made that vow, because only the Monad was in a position to fulfil it. The personality obviously could not do so; so here the Monad came down. We looked that matter up specially because we

doubted somewhat, we did not understand how he could be so utterly sure, and it seemed as though that there was no free will left to the man himself, the ego down here, to do what He would. But the true Self is the Monad. It was that true Self which made that decision; so after all it was the man's own will and no other. The power of the Monad begins to manifest itself only when the ego has done the greater part of his work. Then begins the higher stage of development, a very, very interesting one, but one about which ordinary people like ourselves cannot know very much about as yet. As soon as we attain that level we shall begin to see very much more, and we shall find that the Monad is the greatest of all. There is always a tendency, I suppose it is natural, for these very high things connected with ourselves to seem a little vague. You understand that there is a great Master, many great Masters, but you know that you are not yet a Master. You know that there is a Solar Deity, but you yourself know that you are not yet a Deity. Remember that Christ said: "Ye are all Gods; ye are all children of the Most High." The Divine Spark is there, and although the spark burns low, it is within reach, it may manifest itself, and presently it will manifest itself in every one. Therefore we must not be guilty of the sacrilege of losing confidence in ourselves, because that, after all, is to lose confidence in God who is within us.

XXIII

May 8, 1915.

Confidence:

You must trust your Master; you must trust yourself. If you have seen the Master, you will trust Him to the uttermost, through many lives and deaths. If you have not yet seen Him, you must still try to realise Him and trust, because if you do not, even He cannot help you. Unless there is perfect trust, there cannot be the perfect flow of love and power.

You will see, of course, that these are partly the words of Alcyone himself; he is speaking here of his Master, but the Master Himself spoke similarly of others greater than He, because, just as we speak and think of our Masters, so do They think and speak of the Lord Buddha, of the Lord Maitreya, and of Others like that. So what was said here by the Master to Alcyone was not just exactly in these words; these are Alcyone's own words with regard to his own Master. You had another similar case earlier in the book, "In the light of His Holy Presence all desire dies, but the desire to be like Him." What the Master said there was: "When the Great Ones are seen all lower thoughts and desires fall away." But of course to Alcyone the Great One is His own Master, for the time being, and so he says it in relation

to Him. There are one or two places in the book like this where you have Alcyone's own words rather than the Master's.

Now this utter trust in the Master, of which he speaks as such a necessary thing, is largely a question of one's past. You can see, if you look at the lives of Alcyone, how that was so in his own case. He trusts the Master instantly and fully, because after all he has been in close association with Him through a good many past lives. From those same sets of lives, I see that I myself have been in a similar association in a good many lives, and so probably have many of you. I suppose that I must take that as accounting for the fact that, the moment I read of our Master, I instantly felt the strongest possible attraction towards Him. When I had the privilege of seeing Him, certainly, as Alcyone said, it never for a moment occurred to me to distrust Him. The attitude of different people varies very much according to their disposition, but that disposition after all is a question of their own karma. They have built their own disposition from the long past, and so you find some people who are, as it were, suspicious by nature—well, perhaps that is a word with rather an evil connotation; "sceptical" would perhaps be better. They find it very hard to believe anything. On the other hand—there are some people who are foolishly credulous, who accept anything and everything that they may happen to be told. You see

this type in the world quite commonly. It exists, in a modified form perhaps, in our own Theosophical Society. Neither of these extremes is good for the progress of the man, but at the same time one fully recognises that the man in many cases cannot help his disposition. He could have helped it, no doubt, in lives long past, but the sceptical man has built up his sceptical attitude probably through many lives. He may have had reason for it. In earlier days he may have been very badly deceived through trusting too much in the religion of his day, or in something or other of that sort that was taught to him. So it may be as the result of bitter experience that the pendulum has now swung too far the other way. But though that is so, the attitude is a very unfortunate one, and the man who finds himself the victim of it would do well to weed it out of himself, because, until he does so, he will never satisfactorily believe in anything. It is well not to be blindly credulous—of course one can see that—but it seems to me that, although the sceptical man generally calls his attitude "scientific," it is just as unscientific to doubt, when there is good and clear reason to believe, as it is to believe when there is no such reason. Both these attitudes are alike unscientific. Certainly one must see one's way before one accepts anything. I suppose the fact is that each of us has a sort of scheme of things in general in his mind. I know that I have, for example, and I suppose that every one of

you has. If new facts which are told us fit in with that scheme at once, we are ready to accept these as probable, without demanding exact proof for them. We say, "Yes, that seems very likely; that fits in very well; probably that is so." If, on the other hand, we are told something which does not in any way gear in with all we knew before, we probably, if we are average people, reject it altogether. If, however, you have experience in the study of the inner side of things, you very soon abandon the sort of attitude which refuses to accept the thing because it does not gear in with what you already know. You simply put such things aside, suspending your judgment, neither accepting nor declining to accept them, but merely saying, "From what I have seen so far, that does not seem to be likely, but I do not deny it. I simply put it aside and wait for further light." Into such an attitude as that I have come myself. In fact, I find that, in this Theosophical study, either one knows a thing or one suspends one's opinion about it. It is quite futile to say that, because a thing is not in one's experience, therefore it cannot be. That is the tendency at first, but it is the tendency of ignorance. There are vast numbers of things, laws of nature, huge facts staring us in the face all the time, which we do not know as yet. It is just as well to recognise that in the beginning and to be prepared for it. We must take it for granted that, as time goes on, we shall be confronted with a

number of new and very startling and disconcerting facts. New discoveries are constantly turning up as man evolves, and it is just as much so in the higher fields as in the lower. A generation ago many things, which are commonplaces of our ordinary life now, would have been derided as utterly impossible. I remember, for example, John Bright, who in his way was a man of considerable common-sense, absolutely ridiculing the idea that it would be possible to travel at the rate of twenty miles an hour. Nowadays we habitually travel faster than that and have come to accept it as quite a natural thing. It is distinctly useful for us, as students of these higher matters, to try to get out of the attitude of being bound by our preconceptions. We must be prepared to welcome even revolutionary truths when they turn up. But while we are quite prepared to receive them, we have the right to demand that we shall to some extent understand before accepting them ; for it is useless to accept anything which we cannot rationally fit in with the scheme of things. We must always be sufficiently plastic to accept the new when it has good reason on its side. If it has no apparent good reason, then we should simply put it aside and say that we do not see it yet ; but we need not therefore condemn it, nor condemn the people who hold it. The fact is that truth is a very many-sided thing, and to see it from all sides at once is not commonly given to one

man or to any set of men, even to any philosopher. Consequently there must always be a modicum of truth in things which, as presented, seem unreasonable. One should thus learn not to condemn, and also not too easily to accept.

It is a good deal a matter of a man's disposition whether he finds himself able to trust the Master, when he has not seen Him, in this whole-hearted way which is unquestionably necessary if progress is to be made. People often say: "I do not know what my past has been; I do not care. But here and now I want to believe, I want to trust, but I find I cannot." And he thinks that it is very unjust. He does not realise that the attitude of mind in which he stands is the result of his past which he has made himself. My advice to such a man would be: if for the moment he has not the strength to believe as he would wish to do, at least let him try to move towards that frame of mind. Then in his next life he will find the trust arising spontaneously; he may even in the present life very well reach the stage of trust. He should review his reasons for trust. Those who say that they have no proof of the existence of the Masters (it is quite true they have not) may well study the reasonableness of the idea, the certainty that, since men are evolving and we can see all sorts of stages behind us, there must be other stages of evolution in front of us. We cannot regard ourselves as the crown of the ages; it is a rather

poor crown, and there must be others ahead of us. There is a good deal of testimony from those who have seen Them, who have met and spoken with such Men. Why should there not be these advanced People? He can study the evidence that is given, and so gradually he can bring himself to see the inherent possibility of the thing. Then if he will study what They have said (there is some report of that in our literature) he will see that Those who have been able to say all these things must at least be exceedingly intelligent, highly developed, clever people. He can gradually assemble for himself all the reasons which are available, and so he will bring himself into an attitude of mind where it is easier for him to believe. Then some day, out of that, the inner conviction may arise and not be rejected. Remember that the true conviction often comes to a man and he fights against it, because of his scepticism, and in spite of himself will not believe. That is a foolish thing to do. Rather accept than refuse to accept when so grand and so beautiful a truth is put before you. Often the sceptical man would like it to be true, would like it to believe it. Well, let him make up his mind to accept it until the contrary is shown. Of course in a case where a man does instantly and instinctively trust, it is because after all he, the ego, knows; and yet down here the impression may not come through. Remember, too, that even the ego may not know. The ego may send down imperfect impressions; he

is not all-wise, he knows a good deal more than we in the personality know about certain things, but he is by no means beyond the possibility of making a mistake. The Monad knows, and sees clearly, you may be sure of that. But we have no definite information as to what the Monad knows or does not know. I have told you several times that we who investigate cannot reach the Monad on His own plane; we know Him only as manifesting through the Triple Spirit on the Nirvanic or Atmic plane. That is the highest we know of Him. We know that the ego is a partial, but an extremely partial manifestation of Him, just as the personality is a very partial representation of the ego. You may infer some things regarding the ego from the personality; but you would be wise not to infer very much, because there is a vast amount in the personality which is represented by a blank in the ego. Evil qualities have no existence in the ego; they mean simply that he has not developed the opposite good quality—that is all. And so, even if we knew the ego (and few of us do) it might not be very safe to reason from him to the Monad. The Monad is the Divine Spark; what He knows on His own plane it is difficult for us to say. He puts Himself, or a tiny part of Himself, down into matter in order that He may acquire more experience and more power of dealing with things on these lower planes. Whether that implies that He has already all power on His

own plane, I do not know. I scarcely think that we have the right to take it for granted, because that Monad must surely Himself be evolving, since He takes the trouble to do all this in order to be able to manifest Himself more. He is Divine in essence, but I do not think it follows that that Divine essence is fully developed in its power. I imagine that the Spark is on its way to grow into a mighty Flame and eventually into a great Sun, as it were. So that we must look upon Him as evolving. But, at any rate, whenever the Monad does in any way touch our lives down here, He comes in as a God from above. He comes in at certain great points in a man's life. You will remember that in the case of Alcyone it was the Monad that took that pledge to the Lord Buddha. In all cases of Initiation the Monad flashes down and for the moment becomes one with the ego, just as the two will permanently be one when Adeptship is gained. The nearest we can get to understanding the Monad is from the study of the Adept, in whom the Monad is working in the same sort of way as the Ego is working in us. That shows Him to be a person of stupendous power and purity beyond imagination. That is the Monad of the Adept, a developed Monad. Yours and mine may be very much less developed. One does not know; that is rather a theory and we have no certainty. Those are the only occasions in which we see the Monad in full manifestation, and even that is manifestation

through the causal body on a lower plane. But, at all events, what the Monad knows, we must assume he knows with certainty and conviction ; and similarly even the ego either knows a thing, or does not know it and knows that he does not know it. You see the great trouble down here, in this world of the personality, is that half the people who know nothing whatever about things are persuaded that they know all about them. That is the harm of most of these religious difficulties. People who know nothing about things are nevertheless clamorously insistent that others shall believe that particular delusion that happens to occupy their minds. The ego is never like that ; if he does not know, he knows that he does not know. He is not deceived about things, but he may, be ignorant about certain things. That is quite clear ; you cannot always depend upon the voice of the ego. That voice is conscience, you know. It is the voice of the ego, and you had better follow it, because it is the highest that you know ; but it may be quite wrong. In history we find all sorts of atrocities committed with the approval of the conscience of the people. They persecuted, burned and tortured for conscience's sake. Well, an ego who recommends to them such ideas as those is certainly an ego as yet distinctly ignorant on many important points. Remember Bishop South's celebrated reply to a dissenter : " By all means follow thy conscience, but take heed that thy conscience be not the conscience

of a fool." That is exactly it; you can follow it, but you had better not be quite sure that it will always guide you right. That is where you are; you have that kind of ego and you must take the karma and the consequence of that, but it may not always be absolutely correct. An ego may mislead in all good faith. You will find down here on the physical plane, generally speaking, that the less people know the more certain they are. You will find that in science the people who dogmatise are the students. You go to the great scientific man; he will say: "I have had no experience of such and such things, so of course I could not pretend to lay down the law." I think it is the same everywhere. I remember how the Lord Chancellor once said: "I am as certain of that as the youngest barrister present." It is the youngest person present who is the most certain, because he has not yet learned that there are many possibilities, that you cannot lay down the law too definitely. Those who have been studying for years are much more cautious as to the way in which they express themselves. So amongst us, it is the youngest Theosophist, who has only read a manual or two, who will lecture about karma and tell you all about it. The elder ones rather avoid the subject; they know very well they are not so sure. Of the Law itself we are quite certain, because we have seen the action of the thing so many times, but the method of its action we are not at all sure about. You cannot

escape from it—that is the main fact that emerges. Many people among us talk of not interfering with karma; they must be rather conceited people to imagine that they can interfere, that anything whatever they can do will prevent the action of a law. You might just as well talk of interfering with the law of gravitation. Under the law of gravitation you can do various things, you can allow it to act upon one thing and not upon the other, but you cannot alter that law, and nothing whatever that you do could possibly interfere with the law—so too with karma, you may so live as to make some of its operations unavailing in your case—that you can do. The case of our President is one in point. I suppose no one was ever more heartily abused than the President of the Theosophical Society. All sorts of things have been said about her. Now I suppose most people would be very seriously affected by all those things. They would be in torments of anger, or horror, or hatred, or protest or something. The President takes no notice whatever; therefore karma does not work itself out in that way upon her, simply because she is so impervious to that particular thing. If she is abused along a particular line for more than the usual time, she does sometimes say: "Well, really this is getting a little monotonous. I wish they would find something else." But that is about all. I have been with her and that is about as far as she ever goes. So you see karma falls back rather before

a case of that sort; there is not very much that karma can do, you are rising above it when you get to that stage.

After all it is your own karma whether you can trust or believe or not. You cannot make yourself believe any more than you can make yourself love. Those are things that come. You cannot make yourself love a person, but you can make yourself think of all his good points, and can so gradually see the reason for loving, where before you felt absolute aversion. You can think over the reason for belief and perhaps gradually attain it, but anyhow it is the result of your past. When you say that, however, do not forget the corollary, that your present will be your past in your next incarnation, and that as you manage these things now so will be your condition in that next life, so that you will be able to look back and say: " Well, I made myself in that life what I am now." Difficulties on the Path there must be, and this question of trust is one of the difficulties. Such difficulties must come, because, if you realise it, you are trying to compress the work of three and a half Rounds into a few lives; humanity is supposed to attain the Adept level at the end of the seventh Round, you are trying to attain it in the middle of the fourth. (We do not know exactly what a Round is; it is certainly a great many millions of years, it is practically impossible to arrive at any definite calculation of time. It is not even certain that the time is arrived at beforehand. It

may be rather that when such and such things are done the Round will close.)

Of course some of these difficulties are only in the beginning; they do not attend you all the while, and this question of confidence is for the most people one of initial difficulty only, it does not go on with them all the while.

Of course there are some who have actually seen our Masters, and yet (incomprehensible though it may seem) have fallen away from full trust in Them afterwards. That must be a matter of karma. I remember very well, for example, a young man whom I used to know, a certain Mr. Brown of the London Lodge. You have all heard of him; he has written a pamphlet describing his life, so there is no harm in referring to him. He came out to India and for some karma of the past he had the most unusual privilege of meeting one of our Masters actually in the physical body—a very rare thing indeed, it does not often happen. They come down very rarely from Their Tibetan home, but both of Them have been down to India since I had to do with the Society—only in those earlier years. You may read in *The Occult World* that the Master Koot Hoomi came to Amritsar where the Great Golden Temple of the Sikhs is. He said: "I have seen some of our proud old Sikhs drunk and staggering over the marble pavement of their sacred temple. . . . I turn my face homeward to-morrow." More and more, I suppose, They find that

They can work better on the higher planes and leave the work on the lower to those who are now gradually gathering round Them in the world; that is the most economical way of spending Their force. At any rate, this young Mr. Brown had first seen the astral appearance of the Master K. H. and then he happened to be travelling as Secretary, away in the far North of India, with Colonel Olcott, and the Master came in His physical body to see the Colonel. Brown was sleeping in the same tent, but in a different division of it. The Master spoke for some time with Colonel Olcott, and then came round into Brown's division of the tent. I do not understand it, but Brown covered his head in the sheet and was afraid to face the Master. Curious attitude of mind! Well, of course, in such a Presence one would be highly conscious of one's faults, but to adopt the ostrich-like plan of putting one's head under the bed-clothes does not seem to me to help one much, because the bed-clothes of course are transparent to the higher sight. At any rate that is what Brown did. The Master spoke to him patiently, He said: "Take your head out of the bed-clothes. I want you to see if I am the same person you saw in your astral body." Eventually the Master gave it up and left a little note for him, and only then Brown recovered his senses. He had there an unequalled opportunity, an opportunity for which many of us would give a great deal. We had deserved that opportunity of

course, but did not make the best use of it. Brown is at present in a monastery somewhere in Italy, and, I believe, has come to the conclusion that the Christ is the only true Master. So that you see that the opportunity of seeing a Master even physically does not necessarily convey lasting conviction. It is all very curious; I do not understand it. One would expect that a man whose karma was good enough to give such an opportunity as that would be equal to taking it. But Brown was not, and it is not the only case. Others who have come very near have yet somehow fallen away. There must, of course, always be a reason for it. It is an improper thing to try to pry into. I do not know; at any rate those are the facts of the case.

Generally speaking, we should give full trust to any spiritual teacher whom we accept, even though such a teacher be below the level of a Master. Take the case of Madame Blavatsky. She gave occasional crumbs of knowledge to her people, but she applied pretty rigorous tests to them all the time. Perhaps she was right there, because those who passed those rigorous tests mostly stuck to her. We were unconventional. She cured us of conventionality, but there were searchings of heart among Madame Blavatsky's followers. Many people said she did this and that, which a great spiritual teacher ought not to do. For myself, my feelings were always this: Madame Blavatsky has this occult knowledge, and I am going

to get that knowledge from her, if she will give it to me. Whatever else she does is her affair, I am not here to criticise her. To her own Master she stands or falls and not to me. She may have her own reasons, I do not know any thing about it. She has this knowledge; she speaks of these Masters; I intend to get this knowledge; I intend, if it is humanly possible, to get to the feet of these Masters. And I did. I have never regretted the confidence I placed in Madame Blavatsky. If you are critical by nature, it is your karma, only you will learn much more slowly. It will take you much longer than it does the man who is prepared to accept things reasonably. People talk about their right of private judgment, and say it must not be interfered with. What we sometimes forget, I think, is that they exercised that right of private judgment when they accepted a particular person as their teacher. They might have exercised their right of private judgment to reject that person. The great thing is not to pretend to accept, while really making reservations. It is the old, old story, you know, of Ananias and Sapphira. You will remember these worthy people. When all the early Christians were throwing all their goods into one common lot and very pleased with themselves for having faith to do that, you know that Ananias and Sapphira came along and pretended to be doing the same. But they had business instincts in the background, and they were not at all sure that the new

community was a going concern; consequently they retained a little just to make sure—they did not want to be left penniless. There is not the least objection to that attitude. That was their karma, that is where they stood, and they had a perfect right to make a partial contribution to the common fund, and just keep enough to live upon. We all have to do that now; we contribute to funds as we go, but we must keep enough somehow or other to live upon, and after all they did nothing more than that. The thing that was wrong with them was that they pretended to have perfect confidence and faith, which they had not. The Apostle exposed them, and it is recorded that they fell down dead, presumably with shame, because of what they had done. They were cautious only because it was their karma to be cautious, and they should not have pretended that they had the whole-hearted trust when they had it not. It is quite logical, you know, only of course it does show a lack of the perfect faith. You will find in Occultism that doing things by halves is absolutely no good at all. It is not much good on the lower planes. If you call in the doctor it is only fair that you should do what he tells you and follow his prescription. It is not fair to hold him responsible for results over which he has not perfect control. You have to remember that you cannot play with Occultism. If you do, you get no benefit from it. If it is not the first thing in life, then it is no use; that is very evident. You cannot

have it as the second or third or seventeenth thing in life. Everything else must be subsidiary to it. You must understand that, in Occultism, the people who teach and write mean exactly what they say. This book tells you certain things; it means exactly what it says. People say: "Of course you could not take that quite literally." If you are in that frame of mind you will not make progress. Confidence in the Master does mean that you believe that He knows exactly what you must do, and that He says what He means; and that so, when, as in this book, He lays down certain definite rules, you must follow them, or at least try your hardest to do so. The Path can be found. It can be trodden, because it has been trodden. I know it seems difficult. It is very hard to make people believe just that one thing, that He means exactly what He says. They say: "Well, He means an approximation to that; he means something like it." It is the same in Christianity, the same with the sayings of Christ. The Christian professes to believe them and to follow them, but in practice he says: "It would not be possible to do that now; it is not applicable to the present state of society." He may be right or wrong in saying that, but it is not following the Christ if you do not do literally what He tells you to do. We must learn that Occultism means business very emphatically; that is not the ordinary coat of veneer which the world has. The world often calls it politeness not to express a

thing clearly. That kind of politeness we do not get in Occultism ; there we say just exactly what we mean, and it would be foolish to be offended by that fact. A plain statement is required by the case. A man who, when asked for an occult opinion, glossed it over and did not give a plain statement, would not be doing his plain duty. It is his business to speak the fact as he sees it. It sometimes hurts people who are used to the more roundabout ways of expression of the world, but you are coming out of the world and out of its ways when you come into this study. The Master Himself said : " He who wishes to follow us must come out of his world into ours." It does not mean that you must give up your ordinary life, but it does mean that you must come out of the insincerity of the world into the light of truth.

XXIV

June 15, 1915.

WE were speaking about the quality of *Confidence*:

> You must trust your Master; you must trust yourself. If you have seen the Master you will trust Him to the uttermost, through many lives and deaths. If you have not yet seen Him, you must still try to realise Him and trust Him.

Of course it is practically impossible for us to realise a Master. You may try to do so; you may form the highest ideal you know; but, you see, the Master is supreme in so many ways, of which you know nothing, that practically the highest ideal that you can form of Him is still far too low. You cannot help that, you can only do the best you can. He has so many kinds of greatness that you cannot even imagine. Of course that is infinitely more true when you come to the Solar Deity, the Solar Logos. His greatness is such that no man could possibly understand. It is true even in ourselves, you know, which is in one way a comfort and in another, well, perhaps somewhat humiliating. We too are greater than we know. There are some people who have what is called a "good conceit" of themselves. They think of themselves as always right, as very good persons, and so

on; but the qualities for which they admire themselves are generally not at all the right ones. The ego, for example, is so very much greater in many directions that the personality down here cannot at all understand, and the very things upon which the personality prides himself are often precisely the things which the ego could not in the least acknowledge. Such qualities are often defects and not virtues from the higher point of view. The ego is a far greater individual than the personality. He has all the good qualities in him potentially, but all are not necessarily yet called into action. Nevertheless if, for example, affection is developed in the ego, it is perfect affection as far as it goes, because it is incapable of jealousy, envy or selfishness, or any of those lower qualities. It is a mirror of the Divine Love, in so far as he can reproduce it on his own level. For the more perfect expression of the Divine, we have to rise in thought to the Monad. The ego is a feeble reflection of Him, a crude fragment of what can be expressed down at that level, yet to us that ego and his power of expression seem stupendous. It is a good thing sometimes to try to understand it, because, you see, we are too apt to regard our present position as something of a criterion. We regard ourselves as getting on fairly well, considering the stage at which we are; but it is like a little child of four years priding himself on the fact that he is doing very well. He may be doing well for four years old, but it is a

very different matter for a man of twenty-one, and so it is with us. We may be doing fairly well at our level—I hope we are—but we must not deceive ourselves by imagining that our development is a high development. It certainly is not. What we call intellect is only a very small thing, a poor thing, beside intellect as it will be. In the same way our power of devotion, our power of affection, our power of spiritual feeling, our sympathy, all these qualities which, more or less, we may (not exactly perhaps) pride ourselves on possessing, are ours in such a small degree yet, as compared with what they will be, that we must not rest on our oars, we must not feel too easily satisfied with ourselves, but must always be pressing on and on and trying to gain more and more. You can gain very much more of them in meditation, for example. If you are trying to develop affection or devotion, really set yourself to work to try to feel it, and you will be surprised at the strength of the quality that you can evoke in yourself. And even then you are starting as though to swim into a great lake. You can press on and on and on, almost for ever, without reaching the end. The capacity for these qualities in man is very, very great indeed, because, after all, man is an expression of the Divine. We call up just a little ripple of these things in ourselves and we think that that is the quality. Well, it is, but it is a very, very trifling manifestation of it. To push on and get the real thing is something surprising. We

are told always, you know, that we must not yield ourselves too much to emotion; but remember that emotion, as the very name itself shows you, is a motive power; it is the power of emotion that enables you to achieve, only you must have your emotion under control. It is again, as I have told you before, like a team of horses, you must not allow them to run away with you; so an emotion which develops into a great flood and sweeps you off your balance is bad. It is of no use to you. But a controlled and directed emotion is of very great use indeed. That you are able to feel emotion, affection, is a very wonderful thing, and without that you might be a monster of intellect, but you could never be a perfect man. You must have the power to express all these wonderful surges of true feeling, because, after all, our higher emotions are reflections of Divine emotion. God is love, God is pity and compassion, God is sympathy, and so must we be. So that it is well that we should have the emotion, only it must be strictly, absolutely, under control, because only then is it your emotion. If you have an emotion which sweeps you away, you belong to it, it has power over you; it is not yours then, it is an effort of an elemental entity from outside—of your astral elemental. If it is your emotion, thoroughly under control, it may be a very fine thing indeed, but it must be absolutely under control, and it must be always part of the Divine power. We must not allow

any of those lesser emotions which belong to the lower planes.

The best we can think of all these things is true, but it is not nearly enough. So our realisation of the Master will fall short of Him as He actually is, because He is all these things in something approaching to the Divine perfection. We must trust Him, because, if we do not, He cannot help us. You must remember that the relation between a Master and a pupil is one of the deepest affection that the world knows, but there is nothing in any way personal about it. You may say, from one point of view, that it is an intensely impersonal relation, because for both of them the one idea is the work to be done and how it can best be done. For that reason alone a Master accepts a man as a pupil, not because He has known him in other lives, not because He feels affection for him—for none of these reasons whatever, but only because that man can and will do the work. It is from that point of view that a Master looks at everything, and the pupil learns to look at things from that point of view also.

The whole thing is the Divine work, "The Hidden Work," you know, of the Egyptians. There was always "The Hidden Light" and the "Hidden Work" in the Egyptian Mysteries, the "Jewel in the Lotus," through which the man could really be reached, could be helped, and on which one could always play, to which one could always appeal.

Then the "Hidden Work," the work of building up again the riven body of Osiris, of bringing together all the fragments into their original unity once more—that was the work upon which all the Initiates were engaged, and of course they are still. We do not use the Egyptian terminology, but the meaning that lies behind is always the same and it is in that work, the work of helping the world and promoting evolution, to which we must devote ourselves. We do not allow any other considerations whatever to come in the way of that work. The pupil feels a far deeper affection than he who has not reached that stage, but he uses the Power of that force for the work of the Deity. It is a very wonderful Power. The Power that made the worlds, the Power that keeps them going, is the love of God, and the love of God is shown forth in the heart of the Initiate, in the pupil of the Master. But remember it is a very impersonal relation. It is not unlike that of a soldier to his officer. I suppose in a battle the soldier forgets himself—he must do so. Sometimes you meet with a soldier who remembers himself and remembers the danger that he is in, and thinks more about that than about what has to be done. But do you think highly of the man who takes that attitude? It leads him generally to run away and hide somewhere, which is not his work. Therefore you do not think well or speak well of the soldier who remembers himself and forgets his work. There is a very decided

similarity here. We are in a certain way an army joined together to stand for the right. Remember, no man need join the Great White Brotherhood; no man is compelled to offer himself as a pupil to the Master. There are many who are not yet capable of doing so, because as yet they are too much enmeshed in the world, in desires and feelings; because as yet they have not reached the higher unselfishness necessary for that and do not understand the desirability of service. So no one is compelled to come into Occultism, but when he does so, his attitude must be that he lives not for himself, but for others, not for any personal advancement but only for the work. He must put aside the personal self if he wishes to make progress. Remember we all have a mixed and varied past behind us. In that past we must, to a large extent, have taken the lower and the selfish side—not that we were evil in any way more than other people, but only that all men have come up through that line. Now we must take the higher and not the lower. So the close affection and the great power of the disciple is not for himself, it is always for the work. The Master says here:

> Unless there is perfect trust, there cannot be the perfect flow of love and power.

Therefore the pupil must have that perfect love and also he must have that impersonal feeling, because otherwise the force cannot flow through him. Suppose our Master, for example, wishes to influence somebody,

some outsider. There are thousands upon thousands of men in the outer world who are helpful in one way or another. The Master might very well wish to influence one of these in some way—to send him a little of such and such a kind of force, and in many cases that force needs to be outpoured on the physical plane. Now how would a Master influence such a man? You might think the most obvious thing to do would be to act upon that man's ego, and through that on his personality; but then you have to remember that the ordinary man has only a very narrow thread of connection between his ego and his personality, that the channel is often very much clogged—is not really open. And so, because that channel is blocked, it may be very much easier for the Master to reach the physical plane by means of a channel which is not blocked and through that physical-plane channel to radiate the force on to the person required. It is for that purpose, among many others, that the Master uses His pupil—it is for that purpose that the One Initiator uses His Initiates. He has there an open channel, because, as they have unified the higher and the lower self, the channel cannot be closed. The man is the higher self, and although he has many duties on the physical plane, he does them with that feeling in the background. I do not mean that he is thinking of nothing else, but that is always the dominant idea. "I am I, and I am a spark of the Divine. I could do nothing which would not be

approved by the Divine. *Noblesse oblige.* If I have reached a higher level, then I must act as a man on that level should act." Therefore the channel, in the case of the Initiate or the pupil, is open, and open especially to the influence of his Master, because he is absolutely in harmony with that, and therefore the Master can pour down through that without any loss of force and radiate out upon whomever He may wish to serve.

There are not yet so many pupils of the Master among us, but remember that all of you, by the very fact that you are students of the higher life and are meditating daily and are trying to make your lives what you know they ought to be are more open to such influences than the ordinary man outside. You have been striving—many of you for years—to join the ego and the personality; to clear away the obstacles between. You may not yet have fully succeeded, but at least you have done a good deal; therefore any of you may be used for an outflow of force. True, the Initiate or the pupil would offer the best line, when available, but after all his power has its limits; only a certain amount can be sent through him at a given moment. When all such people are already employed, others may be used. There are many different layers of the force sent out; if we are not yet sufficiently developed to take the highest and the fullest expression, there are many lower expressions which we can take and which can be distributed through us. It is

our business to see that each of us is ready for the use of the Master in our several ways and at our various levels. But you must remember that you have to be receptive to the Master's force or He cannot use you. There comes the point of this remark. You must trust Him. If you are in a condition of doubt as to the existence of the Master,—or of doubt as to your own power to reach Him or to make any progress, then that very doubt sets all the vibrations going the wrong way and you are not a channel that can be used. The same thing is true if you have impurity or anger or depression or jealousy, or anything else of a similar nature. Your vehicles would be vibrating in a way that would close the channel to these higher influences. And then remember, it is all the time the Master's one idea to save the force, to do what has to be done with as little expenditure of spiritual force as possible, so that He may have the more to spend on other work. If you are in any such condition as I have described, you are not the easier channel. It would then be easier to aim at the ego of the man and try to force it down through his half-open channel, because yours would not be open at all; it would be a closed channel and so, useless to the Master. You would fail Him just when He wanted you, by having any vibrations in your various vehicles that would repel the Master's influence of transmitting it. I remember a case of one who aspired very strongly to become a pupil of a certain

Master. He had already been used to serve Him quite a good deal in various ways. The greatest desire of that person, I think, was to see the Master and to be worthy one day really to meet Him. I myself was staying in the house of that person, when the Master came in His physical body to visit that city, but He did not come to the house. I met Him outside and spoke to Him for a long time, but He could not come and see the one who wished to be His pupil, because just at that moment it happened that that person's astral body was very violently affected, was all torn with ignoble passion along certain lines. That happened just at the moment when the Master came physically into that city. Well, there was the opportunity of a lifetime, perhaps the opportunity of many lifetimes, lost. You see what a pitiful thing it is, and you never know when such an opportunity will come. If that person could have known how near the Master was, I am sure that all passion would have fallen away in a moment. Yet for the Master to use His power to drive that away, would have been for Him a waste of His force. I saw Him; His pupil did not.

It is a very sad thing to see a person, for the sake of a temporary lower passion, lose an opportunity like that—a very sad thing.

You must not think that the Master resents want of trust or anything of that kind—that He is hard upon you when He does not come and do all sorts of

things for you, such as removing this or that state of passion from you. No, He will only take the method which will serve the work best, and He will not be swayed by sentimental reasons of any sort. It is well that we should fully and clearly understand that. We have always some sort of idea that sentiment ought to come into play, that the work should yield to personal feelings. Now if you know anything about business, for example, you must be aware it has often been said there is no friendship in business. That is so. There is friendship in this way. If two people are perfectly equal, and one of them is just as desirable for work as the other, you would naturally give the preference to the one who is a friend. But when there is real business to be done, you must take the best man who offers himself, whether he be a friend or not, and to put aside that best man and to take a less efficient one, just because he was a friend, would be to fail in doing your duty to the head of that business. Just so, in this matter of the great world war, you must take the best man to lead your forces; you must take the best man to be at the head of this Ministry or of that, to carry out this or that department of the work. It is not a time for nepotism—not a time to consider whether somebody's nephew could be shovelled into a certain place. No, you must have the best man, the man who can do the work, because it is of all things important to every man that the work should be done. The work of

Occultism is of that nature—it is work that is going to be done, which has to be done, and Those who direct it will take the best man. They will not be influenced by any kind of sentimental consideration. A man says, you know: "I have tried to devote myself to the Master for many years, but of course I sometimes give way to passion and anger; I forget all about Him and become selfish; but I have been trying for a great many years." And they think that constitutes a claim. The only claim is the ability to do the work. It is the Master's duty to take the man who can do the work, whether he be one who has just come to Him or one who has been serving Him for years. There must be no consideration except the practical one of getting God's work done. That is the one and only thing. It is a little difficult for human beings to grasp that, since we have a kind of feeling that we deserve well of Him because we have been failing to rise to the proper height in relation to Him for twenty years. It is not a claim. It has been an attempt, and probably a noble attempt for us where we happen to be; but if some one comes who can do the work better, the Master must take him.

If we could at all grasp the idea of the spirit of the work, we should rejoice. We also should be permeated with the idea that the work must be done. Long ago Ruskin said of a certain piece of work: you should not be swayed by the mere personal

consideration of who did it. "Be it mine or yours or whose else it may, this also is well." You should not hesitate to say that it is well done, even though you did it yourself; you should not fail to recognise the better work of another because it is not you who did it; the one thing is that the work should be done. You will find wonderful passages in Ruskin. He knew, so far as I know, nothing of Occultism, nor did I when I knew him, but he wrote a great deal of Occultism. I never heard him say one word which implied that he understood such a thing. There was no Theosophical Society in those days. Yet there is very much in his writings which bears the true stamp of Occultism, because it bears the stamp of truth and of beauty and of common-sense, and all that is Occultism, you know.

The Master then goes on to the second part of it:

> You must trust yourself. You say, you know yourself too well? If you feel so, you do *not* know yourself; you know only the weak outer husk, which has fallen often into the mire. But *you*—the real you—you are a spark of God's own fire, and God who is Almighty, is in you, and because of that there is nothing that you cannot do if you will. Say to yourself: "What man has done, man can do. I am a man, yet also God in man; I can do this thing, and I will." For your will must be like tempered steel, if you would tread the Path.

Now it is quite true that there is nothing a man cannot do, but remember it is not said that he can do it at once. That is where people sometimes make a mistake. I know very well that they do, because I

get letters, scores of letters, hundreds of letters, from people who are in some serious difficulty—fallen perhaps under the influence of drink, or of drugs, or of some kind of obsession, and they say so often: "I have no will left, it is all gone; I cannot overcome it, what can I do?" When a person is in that condition he can do anything, but not at once. It will take him a long time to get back that will. The will is there, mind, because it is the Divine Will in man. If you had to create the will for yourself, then you might very well despair because there is nothing so difficult as for a weak-willed person to develop a will. But the will is there; it is the Will of God which shows forth in you. You have only to unfold it and develop it and, because it is there, the case is not so hopeless, however bad it may look—and some of them look bad enough. Perhaps you have no idea, those of you who have not met with any such cases, how terrible the hold of such a thing is on a man, how entirely his will is sapped away, and how he feels that he can do nothing, that he is a poor will-less creature, like a worm. Still the will is there, however much it may be hidden. You must get at it, and you must develop it. It can be done. What, after all, has that man done to get himself into such a condition? Probably for the whole of this incarnation, perhaps for one or two previous ones, he has been deliberately yielding himself to the desire elemental, to the temptation of the lower, deliberately letting it

seize upon him. At first he could have struggled against it, he could have resisted, but he let the thing go, and so he has accumulated a momentum of the evil forces; so much so, that he cannot all at once stem it; but he can begin to do so.

I have often used the example, and I think it is a very good one—of a man pushing a railway truck or a carriage at a country station where they have plenty of time to do things. You will see a railway porter shunting a carriage from one line to another. The man shunts it to a siding by himself. See how that man goes to work. There is a huge thing weighing tons. He pushes against it steadily and at first he makes no impression. Presently the thing begins slowly to move; he continues pushing and it moves faster and faster. Then he goes to work to stop it. Now he cannot stop that thing all at once—if he stood in the way and refused to move, it would run over him and crush him. He sets himself to oppose it with all his strength and yet gives way, pressing all the time until gradually he brings the thing to a standstill. He has put into it a certain amount of momentum; he can take it out, but only by a similar amount of force.

It is exactly the same thing, the man who has deliberately yielded himself to the desire elemental has put all that force into the thing. He has put the force into it and he can meet it and face it. Well, you say there is so much of it. But you know, it is

a limited amount. If you would only look at these things not sentimentally but like a problem in arithmetic, you would be wiser. Do not say: "I am a degraded worm, and the force is too great for me." That is not common-sense. Go to work and oppose the force you put into it. You do not know exactly how much you did put in, but of course you are absolutely certain that you, being a limited being, can have only put in a limited amount of force, and the point is that you have an unlimited force at your disposal. Just because you are a spark of the Divine Fire, you have all the power of God behind you. Mind, only very little can come through you at any given time, but it is coming all the while. You have put this much of momentum into this great weight, but it is not a dead weight you are opposing to it now. It is the force of a living creature, with all power behind him to draw upon; and therefore you must bring that thing to a standstill sometime or other, if you will only go on. But the difficulty is that, if you do not get the result at once, you think it is useless. You say, "It is no use trying. I have tried—it is no good." But it is of use. You do not see the effect, but the effect is there. You are all the time slowly stopping this moving thing, but exactly how long it will take you to stop it you cannot tell, because you do not know how much force you have put into it. But what is absolutely certain, absolutely mathematically demonstrable, is that, if you will

only go on, you must win success. The power is on your side, there is no shadow of doubt about it. However many times you have failed, persevere; you can get things right again. I do not say you can always do it in the one life. But here again a person will say: "If I cannot overcome this bad habit now, let me wait till I get another body." He forgets that, when he gets another body, his astral and mental bodies will be an exact reproduction of what he had at the end of the last life. If he leaves them in this hopeless condition he will get others equally hopeless; whereas, if he makes a determined fight against it now, even though it dominate him to the very end of this life, still every struggle is diminishing the force. If he will only go on struggling he will get a very much better body next time. It is very rarely that you get a case so bad that nothing can be done for it in this life; but sometimes you do. The physical body is a wonderfully recuperative organism; but there are some things which it cannot reconstitute. If you lose an arm or a leg you cannot reproduce them. There are lower organisms which can do that, but something so developed as a human being cannot do it. So there are things which, for one life, are irrecoverable. It is the same thing at higher levels. A man may so injure his mental body by debauchery that in this life it can never come back to its pristine condition. Nevertheless if he make a determined attempt against the evil, he will get a

good mental body next time, instead of having one which reproduces all the evil.

You have to remember that all these things must be looked at from the point of view of the ego. If you look at them from the point of view of the personality, there are all sorts of things you cannot do. But from the point of view of the ego, who has all time before him, these things can and will be done. You see illustrations of this in ordinary life. You can never do at once anything that is worth doing in the way of development. It is not enough to have music in your soul; you must train your physical body, you must train your ear and your hands, so that you can make a suitable channel for the power of the music. It is the same with the higher life. It takes time to get anything put exactly as you want it. The ego has to train his vehicles in just the same way as that. I know that, just as many people want to introduce sentiment into the thing, so also people want to introduce something into it which is not the law of nature. They want to be taken right out of their sin and sorrow. It is a very attractive sort of thing that the emotional type of Christian puts before you. The Salvation Army people say: "You will be saved by the blood of Jesus here and now. You will be taken right out of your trouble and sorrow and sin, and it will all be as though it never had been." Of course that is attractive, but it is not true. Yet there *is* a point of view from which that idea is true,

and that point of view is this. If once you realise the right way (and that is what is meant by conversion) and if you thereupon turn round and go along the right way, you will at once be free from all the sin and sorrow and trouble which comes from moving your forces in the wrong direction. If you turn round and send your forces along with the Divine Will, you will be free then and there from all the trouble and difficulties within you which have arisen from fighting against It; but it does not follow that all the outer consequences of what you have already done will be wiped out. You have made the change, and that is the one important thing. You are the "converted" man and you are going in the right way. Nevertheless you have still to endure the results of having gone along the wrong way. You cannot escape from that. But you may change your *attitude* in one moment—that is what is meant by the absolution given to you by the priests. The priest will tell you at once: "I do not profess to put right all the results of the wrong you have done. If you have lived a life of debauchery, if you have undermined your constitution, I cannot put that right. Whatever be the results, those results will remain, and it will be part of your penance to try and undo them. What I can put right is the guilt (to use the ecclesiastical term). You have set yourself at odds with God; you have set yourself across the current of evolution —I can put you straight again. There my absolution

will do something for you; it is the power of the higher will and not the lower. It will take you whenever you want to be taken, and it will give you that turn and help to keep you on the right lines, but the physical results of the past cannot be undone." You have fired a shot, you have thrown a stone; it is gone, it is part of the irrevocable past. You yourself can change your attitude, the priest can put you right on the higher planes, where you yourself lack the power. I do not say you could not do that yourself, but you would do it with very great effort, you would do it clumsily, unscientifically. The man who knows how has been trained to do the thing for you at once. That is the power that lies behind the absolution, but you cannot be freed from all the results of your sin; the laws of Nature do not work that way.

We in the Theosophical Society feel ourselves to be different from other people who do not know what we know. We have been a very long time in getting to it. Read those lives of Alcyone and you will see that a number of us come in to those lives. Look at our condition twenty thousand, thirty thousand years ago. You think we might have been savages then and that we have worked up since that time. Not in the very least. We were most respectable people, most respectable. So that we have not made such an enormous advance. We have just made a little turn, that enables us to see

what is of most importance. Remember in the outer world there are plenty of people wiser than we in many ways; plenty of people with higher intellect, with greater spirituality and with greater power of devotion. Do not make a mistake. We have that one little thing—that we have the knowledge of the way in which we must try to develop, the way in which we must direct our forces. Some of those men of splendid intellect may be using it for themselves. Some of these very devotional people, along with their great love, may be narrow and bigoted. I do not say that we are better than they, but we are more all-round and more balanced perhaps. That man's higher intellect, and that man's magnificent devotion—these are splendid assets, and when those people get the little thing that we have, the knowledge of the way to direct these qualities—then they will go ahead; they may very well pass us on our way because of that splendid intellect, of that great devotion. We shall welcome them and rejoice to see it. There is no jealousy on this Path, you know. Each man hails the advance of his brother, and the world rejoices when any one takes a real step on this Path.

I should like to add to the above the other consideration—that, until you have developed a will and taken hold of yourself, you cannot really offer yourself to the Master. People say: "I give myself entirely to the Master," but do not you see you have

not the entire self to give until you have control over the whole of it? Part of it is in possession of evil qualities of various sorts. You have not a perfect self—a whole self, as it were—to offer; and so it does become our absolute duty to develop this will. As I said to you before, if you had to create a will it would be an impossible task, but this Divine Will is in us, and after all there is nothing to do but to unfold it. The Will is there, the God-Power is in you. I know it is hard for people to realise that; but then we simply must realise it if we are to make any sort of progress in this matter. You find that at every turn.

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CHAPTER IV

LOVE

WE come now to the last of the four qualifications.

Of all the Qualifications, Love is the most important, for if it is strong enough in a man, it forces him to acquire all the rest, and all the rest without it would never be sufficient. Often it is translated as an intense desire for liberation from the round of births and deaths, and for union with God. But to put it in that way sounds selfish, and gives only part of the meaning.

You know that in this book, *At the Feet of the Master*, there are several departures from the ordinary translation of these qualifications. Of all these departures this one is the most daring—the translation of *mumukshatva* as " love ". I cannot call it a translation; it is not that, it is a paraphrase. We do not, of course, all know Samskrit, but most of us know from our reading of Theosophical books, that moksha means liberation, and you see that *mumukshatva* is the same word, is derived from it. The termination *tva* in Samskrit is something like the termination "ness" in English. You speak of a thing being full—" the quality of a thing being full is fullness," and in the same way the quality of seeking

for liberation is *mumukshatva*. It means, practically, to be in a condition of desiring liberation.

The question, by the way, has often been asked whether this moksha, or liberation, is the same as Nirvana. No, clearly it is not. There has been a very great deal of misunderstanding about all these terms. The European Orientalists went always by the exact meaning of the Samskrit—I mean the derivation of the word. You know how often a derivation misleads, because, when a word enters into a language, it is taken up according to the spirit of that people, and they often give it a new meaning. You get quantities of words in English which are derived from the same thing, yet have a different meaning. The word "fact" comes from the Latin *factum*—a thing which is done; the word "feat" comes from exactly the same thing but through the Norman French, it is the same word as "fact"; "fact" and "feat" are the same, and yet we use them with different meanings. But if, because they are derived from the same Latin word, you took them as meaning the same thing it would mislead you quite seriously. It is the same with the Samskrit. To take exactly the cut-and-dried meaning of a word from its derivation is misleading. We have an instance of that in the word "Nirvana," which means "blown out". The idea is that the consciousness of man is blown out, like flame, and that there is nothing left. Orientalists constantly use that as a sort of explanation

of the term: "If you blow out a candle, where is the flame?" But, in the same sense, where is the man when he is blown out? That is precisely that way in which I got over that question myself. When they wanted to catechise me, as a Buddhist of the Southern Church, they asked me if I believed that nothing survived. I said: "Well, probably nothing that you know as the man will survive." They said that was quite different. But I said there is much more that you do not know as the man, and that this survives. They had nothing to do with that; I might believe it if I liked. It was quite outside the exact wording of the scriptures, so that did not matter. That is of course the exact fact;—what you know now as the man, what you call his intellect and his desires, all the personal manifestation of him, will be "blown out," because they belong to the lower part of his nature, otherwise you could not see him; but the higher part which is the real man—that is not blown out. So you see how the idea arises that Nirvana means annihilation.

In the same way moksha means liberation. That is quite right and yet it is not at all the same thing as Nirvana. I ought to warn you, I suppose, that the Theosophical use of many of these terms would not be recognised as accurate by Professors of Saṁskrit at Oxford or Cambridge. They would cling absolutely to the literal meaning of the word. The people who use these words as living things in their religion

apply to them, of course, the meaning which the words have come to bear through many centuries of use; and we in our turn, coming to the thing afresh, but trying to understand it according to the facts as we see them, very often use the word with a shade of meaning which is different from both these. Quite certainly we should not use Nirvana as "annihilation". Very far from it. There could be no two things more widely apart. But also it is very possible that the Buddhist idea of Nirvana may not be exactly the same as the Theosophical idea. It is very difficult to understand what their idea is, not because they express the thing in terms which are vague, or because of any defect in their intellect—they are great metaphysicians and philosophers—but because that which they are trying to express is inexpressible, and so to try to put it into words means usually, well, to degrade the conception somewhat. Those of us who have experienced that which is meant by the word Nirvana try to explain it to you by saying that it is the attainment of a certain plane of consciousness; that you are just as much conscious as you ever were—in fact very much more conscious, because you are in reality nearer to the real Consciousness. Yet that Consciousness is so much wider than anything you know down here that you hesitate to call it your consciousness. You have become one with a very much greater consciousness; only, you know, there is something which is misleading if you

are not careful, in speaking of being merged into a greater consciousness, of becoming one with it. The man who is not used to our Theosophical form of the conception always thinks that this means that you have lost yourself—that you have merged into something greater and are therefore no longer yourself. The feeling to you is that the greater consciousness has merged in yours. You have not the slightest sense of having lost yourself or the continuity of yourself; yet having all that, you have lost the sense of being separate. Of course I know that sounds like a paradox. You say: "How do I know myself? Because I am separate from other souls." Yes, I know that seems so down here, and you cannot very well express it otherwise. The truth is, that you will all find it when you get high enough up in your meditation. The Buddhic will give you that much of the feeling. You get the feeling, when you touch that level—that you are yourself—absolutely yourself as you always were. You are watching, you are observing all that happens, and yet you have this enormous wideness which contains everything. I know how hard it is for people to grasp that, but when you experience that everything, then you will know that that is so—that though you are so infinitely wider you can no longer think of yourself as separate.

All efforts fail to put these things into words; because we are talking the wrong language. We have not words to express these things. At any rate

you must not take it for granted when you meet with any of our Theosophical terms, in Hindu or Buddhist books, that they mean exactly the same thing. Very often they do not; they have quite different meanings. I should not like to try, for example, to define exactly what these books mean by Buddhi, only I am quite certain what we mean by it. Ours is a far more general conception. We are eliminating some of our worst mistakes. We have got rid of the term Linga Sharira. It used to be a name given to the etheric double of each man. Presently our President began to learn Samskrit, and then it was found to be something quite different; therefore we dropped that term.

It is very difficult to get shades of meaning. Suppose a man who knew nothing about the Christian religion tried to understand such a word as "grace," he would look it up in the dictionary and he would find there certain meanings of the word grace, but those are not what it means to a Christian when he talks about an outpouring of grace. If he looked it up in the dictionary he would get entangled with words like "graceful" and "gracious" and get quite on the wrong track. That is so also with "dispensation". In ecclesiastical language it is quite a different thing from what it is in ordinary life. So with a great many other things. You speak ecclesiastically of "elevation" in a very special sense; you do not mean at all what you mean

by it in everyday life. Every religion has a number of terms which, in process of time, come to have their special religious meaning; and unless you have been brought up in that religion, approaching it from inside instead of outside, it is not easy to get the exact shade.

In the beginning of the Theosophical movement, none of us knew Samskrit. Madame Blavatsky knew something of the religions, but she did not know a word, practically, of Pali or Samskrit. Her method was to describe anything that she herself saw as well as she could, and say to the nearest Indian: "What do you call it in your system?" The poor man did not understand, because the ordinary Indian's knowledge of English is not good enough to enable him to understand shades of meaning. He often did not know, but he gave her the nearest he could. Next time she wanted a word she would ask another man; but she never paid any attention to the fact that the first man might be a Hindu and the second man a Buddhist, while the Hindu might belong to any of the six great systems of philosophy. All these six systems use these terms with slightly different shades of meaning, and so you can see how we got into confusion with all these words. We have only recently begun to realise that the better thing is to drop the Samskrit terms and use English words, if we can, explaining in the beginning what we mean to convey by those words. This seems to be the only thing to do.

It would be better, perhaps, if a Christian were writing, to use the English word "grace" and say exactly what he meant by it in the beginning, than to employ some Greek or Latin word which would be used by the Greek or the Roman in a quite different sense. You have an example of this in a chapter which you all know very well; "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, and the greatest of these is charity." You will find in your new version that the word "charity" is given as "love," but it has taken them several centuries, since the Bible was translated, to find that out, because the Greek word is *charis*, and the Latin is *caritas* and it looks like the English word charity. We have made "charity" mean "giving, as an evidence of love," but it really means not only the giving but the spirit that gives, so that the word love is nearer the original.

So with all these words, moksha means "liberation," and if you ask "liberation from what"? they will tell you that it is from the *Samsara*, which means the round of births and deaths. You will see that, in that, nothing is said as to the man's reason for wanting to get away. Any man who wishes to escape from birth and death is a *Mumukshu*. His reason for doing that might be that he was tired of this perpetual round, that he held, as the Lord Buddha did, that all manifested life is sorrow because it is limitation. The Lord Buddha did not say that a man might not have joyous interludes, but that

the whole thing is sorrow, because it is limitation, it is a sacrifice. Now a man holding that idea might say: " What is the cause of all this? Why am I held in this round of birth and death?" It is the desire for the manifested life, the desire to find oneself keenly alive, that is what brings the ego back into incarnation—to feel once more the vibrations to which it can respond. The whole object of the ego in putting itself down into lower matter is to limit itself, in order to respond to vibrations to which it cannot respond at its own level. Could it respond to begin with, there would be no need for all this; but it cannot; the vibrations which pass through it are too keen, too rapid to make any impression; therefore it puts itself down, down, down, into denser matter, until it reaches a point where, because of the slowness of the vibrations, it can respond and feel low and coarse ones at first, because they are the slowest, but gradually others, which are a little better, and again a little better, and in this way he passes from the physical and etheric to the astral, from the astral to the mental, and learns to build himself bit by bit in that way. That is where humanity is at this moment. We are developing the mental body. You by means of your meditation are making determined efforts to press on a little further, so as to get glimpses of the higher plane. You are trying to get touches of intuition from the Buddhic plane. The world at large is still in the process of trying to develop its mental

body, and no one outside students of Occultism has yet learnt to use that mental body as a vehicle. I do not say you always do, because you have not formed the habit of doing so in past lives. You are probably only now acquiring the habit and getting to feel at home in it, but it is quite perfectly developed and ready for use. There is no doubt at all about that. That lower part of your mental body is in perfect order and ready for use, and even a little bit above that the higher part of the mental body is coming into activity. You are trying by your meditation to get the whole of your mental body developed, and under control. When you have done that perfectly you can then begin to use it as a vehicle to travel about in. At night you can leave your physical and astral bodies and the rest of the rubbish, and use your mental body as a vehicle; and travel in that instead of using the astral. When you have done that, you repeat the process with the causal body, and when you can use your causal body perfectly then you are already an ego acting on his own plane. We have not got to that yet, but we are trying for it. All those lower vehicles are temporary things which you put on in order to be able to learn how to use that plane and respond to its vibrations. But when you have done that perfectly, and have got your ego working perfectly in his causal body, there is no need to incarnate any more in these, because, having triumphed over them, you can at any moment

materialise a temporary astral and mental body and show yourself and do what you want to do. You need no longer go through the wearisome round of birth and death, disease and decay, which are so unpleasant. Perhaps you do not always think of it as so unpleasant because you get a little enjoyment out of life. Yes, but if you could only look at it from the standpoint of the ego, what an unspeakable bore it is to an eternal Spirit to be down here "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd" in a body which cannot do this and will not do that, in which he cannot do anything he wants to do! While we are in it we make the best of it, but it is only a temporary vehicle, this, put on for the purpose of learning; and when you have learned the lesson and have done that, you are very glad to get rid of the whole thing. There is no kind of question about that. The man who has realised that the whole of life is sorrow and that it is this desire for manifestation which drags him into incarnation may say to himself: "I will get rid of this desire, which is the primary cause of bringing me down into incarnation. What else brings me down? Karma. I have done certain things, and the karma of these actions drags me back to receive the results, whether good or bad. I will balance that karma." The man who can say this is already a developed man; one who must have thought a good deal about these things—a metaphysician and a philosopher—not a bad man by any manner of

means. He says deliberately: "I will shut off the desire; I will balance the karma accurately and then there will be nothing to bring me back." Of course, that is true; when one succeeds in doing that (and there are many in India who have succeeded at different times in doing it) the man escapes from this round of birth and death. What becomes of him? He lives eternally in the heaven world or perhaps he may reach the causal level. He does not as a rule get any higher than that; I think I have never known of a case which went higher than that; but at any rate, he is clear away from birth and death, he has escaped from it, and therefore he has attained his moksha. But he has done it for selfish reasons. I admit it is a spiritual selfishness, it is not what we commonly call selfishness, for the man who can do that must be a man who has raised himself above all lower passions and desires—otherwise the thing would be impossible. But he is a man who has forgotten one side of evolution. He has learned the action of the law of karma perfectly, and therefore he has been able to free himself from it. He understands it. He has not learned perfectly the law of evolution because he has not freed himself also from that. His position is that he is a long way in front of the average man—a very much better man, a very much more spiritual man than the average. So there he remains. He floats in the atmosphere of the world, as part of its evolution, but

away ahead of it all. It is something like what would happen in the case of a very clever boy, who got ahead of his comrades and took several examinations in advance. Such a boy could afford to lie up and do nothing for three or four years while the others were getting to that level. It is very much like that. But there would come a time when his comrades would overtake him. That is precisely what happens to the man who attains moksha. He has not attained the goal which is set for humanity to attain, because the evolution of humanity ends in Adeptship. Now, an Adept is not only a man who is free from birth and death, but he is also a living power. He has made himself one with the Monad, who is in turn a spark of the Deity. But the plan of the Deity is to put Himself down, to pour Himself out in utter self-sacrifice into this whole field of evolution. Therefore the man who becomes one with the Deity must also be filled with the spirit of self-sacrifice; otherwise he is not truly one with Him. He is not expressing a very important side of the Divine life, therefore the man who attains moksha presently finds himself lying near the average level. The tide of evolution rises to his level and laps round him once more and he has to come back and be born and develop what previously he has not developed. Of course that time will be a long way ahead, because to get the average of humanity up to that level will take many generations, many, many

thousands of years, probably. So the man who attains moksha, even if theoretically he knows this—and in India I think many of them do know—argues that that is such a remote future that things will be better by that time; everything will be easier, even the very matter will have changed. He says "I can afford to risk that; anyhow I shall gain thousands of years of freedom from all this; all that time in the heaven-life enjoying myself." That is all quite true; only, when the tide of evolution rises to that level, such men will have to be born among us again and indeed I can quite imagine they will be a little behind the rest through the fact that they have not been thinking of the good of the humanity, but only of their own gain. You will observe that a man of this description is not one who is likely to make very great progress in his beautiful heaven-life, because he is not a man who has been in the habit of thinking of others, he has that side of himself which has not progressed. If he had been in the habit of thinking of others, then he would never have gone off on that side line at all. That is the difference between the man who has attained moksha and the Adept. The Adept is not one who sits in selfish isolation, he is one who recognises his duty to the humanity of which he is a part. The Adept does more good works than the greatest philanthropist could possibly do, and is doing them all the time on higher planes, but he does them on behalf of the humanity of which he is a

part, therefore the karma from them comes to humanity and not to him, so there is nothing to bind to rebirth, but the whole of humanity gets a little uplift. It is not a great amount of uplift, that amount of karma spread all over the world, but it does mean a steady uplift. We say we get exactly what we deserve. So we do, and it is always just a little better than we do really deserve, for this reason, that the karma comes straight back to us, but a little bit higher up than you were before, and so you are a little better off than, strictly speaking, you ought to be. No injustice in it, because it is just the same for everyone, bad and good. We are all being uplifted. Always there is just a little on the credit side. You can call that, if you like, "the mercy of God". The people who are making the greatest good karma do not take it, but throw it into the general pool for all, and that also helps humanity to rise a little more.

So you see, it is this question of thinking about others which makes the great difference between the man who seeks liberation only for himself, and the one who seeks it only in order that he may help; and it is a vast difference.

Another point to be remembered is that our ideal is perfect consciousness on the highest level we can reach. I do not know whether you know exactly what is conveyed by that other Samskrit word *samadhi*. People talk about "passing into

samadhi," and those who love the rolling sound of the Samskrit better than English always talk about going into *samadhi* when they meditate. It is not a happy use of the term. The real meaning of this gave us a great deal of trouble. We could not understand the things said about *samadhi*. They seemed to contradict one another. Some said it was at this level, some said it was at that. Presently we discovered that there were different "samadhis". It was only gradually that it dawned upon us that it is a very relative term. *Samadhi*, for anybody, is the point which is just beyond the point where it is possible for him to retain his consciousness. If you are conscious on the astral and not on the mental, then for you *samadhi* would be at the mental level. It is to get just beyond the point where you can be conscious, to pass into a sort of trance from which you emerge with all sorts of glorified and beautiful feelings but not generally with consciousness, because you have gone just beyond the point. Of course that point is different for people at different stages.

We do not want anything of that kind. The Masters teach us that in all these meditations our business is to retain our consciousness so that we may come back and remember what we have seen. I know that many people have done it and have got a feeling of happiness and of beatitude. It does not mean Divine progress, because they lose hold and do not quite know what they have been doing, and there is

always a certain danger in that. You do not know that you will be able to return.

I very well know that myself. Your President and myself were watching some of those tremendous outpourings of life from the higher planes, those great waves of life which come pulsating forth the Solar Deity. While watching one of these the President said: "Suppose we throw ourselves into that wave and see whither it takes us." We did so, and swept upwards, until suddenly her Master appeared and stopped us, and of course we at once obeyed. Afterwards the President asked the Master: "If we had gone on with that wave, where should we have found ourselves?" He said, "You would have lost consciousness and you would have washed up in a million years or so somewhere on Sirius, or some other solar system." Manifestly it does not do to throw yourself into outpourings of that sort, when you do not exactly know what the Deity is trying to do with those waves of life. It is not a good plan to lose consciousness; much better try to get yourself in hand and see a little bit where you are going; otherwise you might lose your physical body and your temporary usefulness. In the long run you would not be much worse off, but from our point of view you would lose time and cause a certain amount of anxiety to your old friends. It is better not to plunge into things of this sort. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." It is better to be

cautious. So I would say, do not let your consciousness go. You do not think anything of that because you do it every night. I can tell you that, when you get the continuous consciousness, you find it quite enormously better, because there is no loss of anything; then you know exactly where you are. You leave your physical body and make arrangements accordingly. I can imagine that Adam, if there were such a person, might have felt quite alarmed when he first found himself dropping off to sleep. He might have fought against it until at last it was too much for him and he fell asleep, and presently he would wake up and find he was all right. If you were not used to sleep you would think it was like death, as indeed it is in many cases. Our line is to keep full consciousness at every level which we can reach, and to try to be of use on that plane. The idea of being of use permeates the whole of our Masters' teachings. They never speak of mere passive contemplation. You never sit down and enjoy yourself anywhere, but get to work and see what you can do.

This paraphrase that our Master has given of moksha, "Love," is evidently characteristic of Him, because He goes behind the word itself to the reason for it. He says: "What is your reason for wanting liberation?" In order that you may be free to help better. You are trying to make yourself one with God. What is this God? God is love. Then you must develop

love if you want to be one with Him, and the more you can show forth love, the nearer you are to an expression of the Deity. Therefore I say this qualification is, in reality, Love.

It is very characteristic of Him, because that is always His characteristic—an intense compassion, but always active compassion; no idea of sitting down and being sorry, but always of getting up and going to work and help. Always an active form of love, not merely contemplation.

I suppose, perhaps, it is a difficulty for us to understand the attitude of the rest of the world sometimes. I suppose you have all read *Man: Whence, How and Whither*, and you will remember how it spoke there of the different boat-loads of people who came over from the other Chains to this, and how certain of those groups of people were spoken of as the boat-load of Servers. Now practically all of us in the Theosophical Society belong to that group, because this idea of service is somewhere in us, is a very strong factor in our dispositions. It comes from very far back, because we were servers in the very beginning of the evolution of this world. We find our Masters waiting and picking out Their people, those in whom They saw the germ of this idea of service. You know how hard it is to get away from anything with which you are born,—your nationality, for example. It carries with it all sorts of little points of view, little differences which are

very difficult to get over. That is the nationality of the personality, but this idea of service you may call the nationality of the ego, or perhaps even of the Monad. He was born with that streak in him and has been cultivated along that line. He has the desire to be of service. It gets stifled in our worldly lives and we sometimes forget it, but it crops up again. We are willing to work for others when we get the chance. Our Masters belong to that type. What is hard for you to understand I suppose is that there are other types which are just as good. The Solar Deity manifests Himself through three aspects, Will, Wisdom and Love. That is how they are given in this book. Others may seek to approach Him along the two former lines; but we, broadly speaking, are trying to express the Love aspect, and therefore try to do all we can because that is the line of our Master, and if we wish to follow Him we must follow that line. There are other people whose one idea is devotion, to merge themselves in the Deity whom they worship. That seems to you a selfish thing. It is not really. There are others who desire to reach the Wisdom of the Deity and to merge themselves in that, and their intense desire is to be as wise as He is. There is a point where all these run together. Later on you will find that the wisdom and the devotion lead men to see that they must serve the Master whose idea is service. They realise that they will do it better when they have acquired

the wisdom and the power of the fully developed will behind them. The devotional man finds that without wisdom he makes mistakes, and unless he is trying to serve he cannot be like his Deity because the Deity is serving. So the three come together if you get high enough. It is very difficult, but nevertheless it is a duty that we should feel no shadow of reproach for these other people whose line is different, that we should not even think of ourselves as better than they. Your line is the best for you and you are following it; but remember that the other man's line is better for him, and that in the long run they all merge. So, however difficult it may be, we must acquire that characteristic of the Deity—the characteristic that looks out simultaneously through all the aspects and knows that in truth they are all one, and that when they come back into Himself they come back as one God and not as three. There are Three Persons. Remember how you are told in the Athanasian Creed that you must hold this doctrine of the Trinity, never confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance. You must learn that through all eternity there is only one God, whose manifestations are through Three Persons, but that all these Three are co-eternal and co-equal.

XXVI

June 29, 1915.

YOU remember we had commenced the consideration of the fourth qualification—*Love.* We had been speaking of this qualification as having been most usually translated as an intense desire for liberation. He says:

> But to put it in that way sounds selfish, and gives only part of the meaning. It is not so much desire as *will*, resolve, determination.

We have been speaking of the group of Servers to which, I hope, all of us belong, and we were saying that we had that as a kind of nationality, the nationality of the Monad, his " national " characteristic being that he desires to serve. That is for us, I hope, the most prominent characteristic ; it certainly is in the Monad, even in the ego. In the personality it is sometimes obscured by the desires of that personality, but we endeavour always to realise ourselves as the ego and as the Monad behind us, and not to yield ourselves to the passing moods of the personality. It really will help you in understanding and in doing that, if you will remember that all that passes and changes does not belong to the ego. If you have fits of great exaltation succeeded by fits of

great depression it is not the ego that is depressed, it is not the ego who is unduly exalted. He remains firm and steady in his purpose all the time. It is only the astral body which is running away with you, first in one direction and then in another; and because his undue exaltation is usually followed by deep depression, even that is a thing to be careful about—a thing to permit only within certain very definite limits, so that you may know that you will be able to check any reaction that may come.

Depression you must not allow at any cost. It does you harm and it does harm to other people. If you yield yourself to it, it makes their burdens harder for them to bear. People often say that it is so difficult to distinguish between what comes from the ego and what comes from the personality. This is the great rule—that which is changing cannot belong to the ego.

So with all of us the ego has been, as it were, stamped with this seal, with this desire for service. Intention to serve is perhaps a good way to put it, so that whenever anything comes in our way, when anything happens to us or when we meet any person, our first thought is, "How can these circumstances be used for the work?" That is the one thing we think of. You know there are some worldly people in business, who always think when they meet a new person: "Now how can I turn this meeting to my advantage?" That shows they are thoroughly in earnest

along the line of making money or whatever it is. Everything is made to subserve that end, and I think we ought to be just as earnest along our lines; but somehow people do not find that so easy as the other. It should be easier, because that is the real feeling of the ego, there is no question about that. It is only that the ego gets so clouded, so hidden behind the personality. So let us say: "How can each circumstance be used for the work?" That must always be the first consideration, not: "What do I feel? Do I like or dislike that person?" That is not the point. What can be best done to serve the work, that should be the one idea.

It was said here in the beginning that if love is strong enough in a man it makes him acquire all other qualities. Now you know how that works. It makes people act according to their power to act, which, of course, varies very much. Take one of the very best and most useful examples, mother-love. Let us see how that operates among a savage race. The mother-savage does not know much. She is very ignorant, but at least she is prepared to defend her child, to fight for him, and even if necessary to sacrifice her own life in his defence. The civilised mother among ourselves would do just the same thing, in the same circumstances; but these circumstances do not as a rule arise. Now and again they do. You hear of a mother losing her life in saving her baby from a burning house, or more often sacrificing her life in

attending to it when it has some infectious disease. But in ordinary life what does that strong mother-love make the mother do? It makes her set to work and think. She feels: "Here is the responsibility of a child come upon me, a child whom I love heartily. I do not know much about children, well, I must learn; I must get books on the subject; I must acquire information." It makes her a learned person along that line. That is the way it works with us. Not that she would not do the more rudimentary things if they came in her way. But with her it is more a question of studying and thinking. "I must learn what I ought to do; learn how children are best managed and so on." And so you see the love for the child sets her to work to study these things and to find out all about hygiene and all about food and things of that sort.

Now, along our line a man must have an intense desire for service if he would reach the Master. I remember well, it is thirty-one or thirty-two years ago, the time when Mohini Mohan Chatterji, who was a pupil of the Master Koot Hoomi, came to London. He had been sent to instruct the London people in Theosophy, because there were a large number of us very keenly interested but having nothing before us except Mr. Sinnett's books, which indeed are very fine books, and include in fact nearly everything that has been published since either by implication or direct statement. But still we were

very much lacking in detail of all sorts. We had *Isis Unveiled*, but although *Isis Unveiled* is a most wonderful collection of miscellaneous information, it is hardly so arranged as to give one a very clear idea of things. We had not in our minds a sufficiently comprehensive plan; there was a vast amount of detail lacking. Therefore, the Master sent this man, this Indian, to give us information, and he did. He was very useful indeed to us, and I quite remember his speaking to us about these qualifications, which were not treated of in Mr. Sinnett's books. He told us quite plainly that without this qualification, this intense desire for liberation—that is the way he put it, he did not speak to us of love—he told us that without this intense desire for liberation and for union with God, the six qualifications, which are given here as the six points of Good Conduct, were like watering the desert; that they would be really acrid and all but valueless to us unless we had this intense desire to be one with God and to do as He does. And since His outpouring of Himself is utterly unselfish, that means unselfishness and therefore service on our part also. Those details as to service were not so clearly worked out in those earlier days. We were far more fully occupied in trying to learn Theosophy, in trying to understand it. All was so new, so beautiful, so exciting and so interesting, that our time was mainly given to that; much more to that, perhaps, than it really ought to

have been, except that one must learn something first before one can be of use to others.

It says here: "It is not so much desire as will." I remember the Master K.H. saying a very important thing about that once to Alcyone. Remember it is the Master M. who stands on the First Ray, the strong point of which is Will and Power. The Master K. H. belongs to the Second Ray, that of Wisdom and of Love; but nevertheless He spoke as a man on the First Ray might have spoken. When Alcyone said something about desiring to attain a certain quality, his Master said to him: "Do not desire a thing, desire is a feeble thing; will, because you are God. You are God. If you want to acquire a quality, will to do so and do it." That is very well worth remembering. Do not desire a thing, desire is feeble. You desire something which you are not quite sure of getting. In this case you may be absolutely sure, because you are God. If you desire a thing, go and do it. Do not waste your time desiring; just set your will. And that, as coming from One who is not on the special line of Will, struck us all the more.

You see how emphatically that is the point of view of the Hierarchy. It is very important indeed for every one of us to understand the Master's point of view, because it is precisely that—His point of view, His attitude and His way of looking at things—which brought Him where He is now. And then He

says: "If you want to work with us you must come out of your world into ours." That means that you must adopt Their attitude, Their way of looking at things; and that is one of the points in which Their world differs from ours. You must not waste your time desiring a thing; you must go and do it. Then He says:

> To produce its result, this resolve must fill your whole nature, so as to leave no room for any other feeling. It is indeed the will to be one with God, not in order that you may escape from weariness and suffering, but in order that because of your deep love for Him you may act with Him and as He does. Because He is Love, you, if you would become one with Him, must be filled with perfect unselfishness and love also.

And so you see that the pupil of our Masters has only one desire and that is, to serve. He knows perfectly well that he is only like a small wheel in a very huge piece of machinery, but, all the same, his one idea is to be a perfect wheel so far as it goes.

Now people often think that cold; they think that it shows a lack of feeling. That is not so in the least. Of course, if you said to the ordinary man in the world, the man you meet in the street, that he was to give up all that he thought of as himself, he would justly ask: "But what will be left of me if I do that?" It would be quite true that there would not be much left of him, because he would have to give up all the lower side, and the truth is that the ordinary man has not yet begun to think very seriously

of anything higher. Yet he is very well satisfied. He takes life very much as he finds it, and his desire is not to get out of this kind of life into something higher and nobler, but rather to succeed in this life and make a good thing out of it. So it is true that if he gave up all that he knows of as himself, in that case there would not be very much left, so far as he could see, although the whole of the reality would in truth be left. It is difficult to explain to him such a phrase as being "merged into the Divine Life," for example. You could not make him understand it. Well, you have probably spoken sometimes to people and perhaps realised how hopeless it is. I remember a man—a very good ordinary man, a clever man too at that, who had made a considerable study of Buddhism;—it was the Northern Buddhism he was trying to study. He came to me one day and said: "I cannot make anything out of this, it does not seem to be worth following up. I have read through a number of books; it is quite interesting as a study in archæology and so on, but the only object they put before you seems to be to become one with the Buddha. I cannot see that that would be of any value to the Buddha, and it certainly would be the end of me." That is the point of view the average man does take of these things. He has not the faintest idea of what we mean. It is to be feared that some of our own members also have not much idea of what we mean.

There is a real, a glowing meaning to all that. If you can once get hold of that, it will revolutionise your whole conception of life. It is difficult for the man to understand that this widening of the consciousness does not mean the end of him. He does not lose in the least his perfect freedom; he does not lose his individuality in any way whatever, if he takes in all this as well. "The universe grows I"—not, "I am absorbed in the universe," but "the universe grows I". When you touch the thing—some of you, I know, have touched the Buddhic plane—then you understand far better than any words can ever tell you.

You meet the same sort of thing down here in everyday life, something that will serve as a kind of example. If you have a great mercantile house, and some young fellow joins it as a junior clerk, at first he regards the house as a sort of taskmaster, and he tries to get as much as he can out of it and to give as little as possible in return. But after he has been there for some years and has been raised to some more responsible position, then he begins to identify himself with the house. He begins to say: "We do this," and "We do that," and he is beginning to identify his interests with the interests of the firm. So he goes on until he comes to be a manager, and then a partner, and then the identification is perfect. Then he speaks always for the house, to him that firm has become the one thing

which is always in his mind. He has not lost in volition in the least; he is just as free as ever; just as capable of taking the initiative along any line. The firm has not coerced him into that attitude; he has grown into it. So now he *is* that firm. That is only a small illustration down here, but it gives a sort of idea of the way in which you may develop enormously in power, yet your will may be as much your own as ever. You are now certain to use it along the right line, that is all that it comes to. People do so often make that mistake. They think that in some way or other they will lose their freedom or their sense of individuality.

They will not lose that sense of individuality, but they will lose the feeling that the individuality is a separate thing. They will realise that it is a very much wider thing than they ever supposed before, but it is still " I ". They say: " I am I ". It is a delusion as supplied to the lower self, but when you realise the truth " I am God," then the sense that the God is God is not an illusion at all, and the sense: " What I thought was I is in reality an expression of Him," is not an illusion either. There is only one Self, but that Self is not an illusion. It is only the idea that anything can exist outside it or be separated from it that is an illusion. So one must try to understand this thing, even though in the lower world we cannot fully understand it. Naturally enough there are so many things we cannot fully understand, but

we can see the line along which the explanation of them must lie. In so many cases that is the best we can do with regard to the mysteries of the higher planes. Every one will one day experience that higher consciousness in some incarnation—in this incarnation, I should think, in the case of most of you. Some of you I know have touched it already. When you have, it comes as a revelation of the most marvellous description, but you can no more explain it to your fellow-students than I can explain it to you now. You do not lose your free will but use it always in the right way. There will come a time when you will have become the Path itself, because it will be utterly natural to you to keep the rules.

When you have developed the qualities, you will never break those rules. You will never fail in any of the qualifications because they have become part of your very nature, they have grown into you. You have developed yourself until you have touched the Buddhic, the Divine. You are in the Divine all the time. I know very well, as I said on Sunday night to the people, that you are close to the Living God all the time, because He is in you and with you and about you always, but it is for you to learn to realise that, for you to raise your consciousness step by step, bit by bit, employing all the means that come in your way until you can really grasp that idea. You want to become one with God in His higher manifestations, in the intellectual manifestations,

not merely in the material form. The matter of your body, the matter which surrounds you, that also is He—His outer garment; but it is not with the garment, it is with Him that you wish to become One. When you become One with Him, He on His side will use you as a channel through which His force can be poured. A channel, yes, but a living channel; you can bring your intellect to bear in directing and applying the force that He sends through you. You must not think of yourself as merely sitting there and being a pipe through which force can be outpoured. That is entirely true from one point of view; there are outpourings of force which do come through a pupil in that way. The pupil knows to whom they are to be directed without using his own volition; he is simply told that the force is to go through him to do such and such work. But also there is a vast amount of the Divine force given to him which he can employ as he will, which he can turn this way or that as he sees it to be needed. His own powers of adaptability and tactfulness are called into play all the time, it is by no means blind obedience—very far from that.

Remember that, however good you may be, you must also be a spiritual intelligence who can be of some use with your goodness. So do not fear that you will lose your individuality or that you will be merged in something and know yourself no more. We are the Divine force on these lower planes, but only when we

realise that we have no separate personality in opposition to Him. You see He works by means always, and His Ministers, the Great Occult Hierarchy, work by means also. No doubt they could work all sorts of miracles, in the form of direct action, on all sorts of people, but it would use up a great amount of Their force unnecessarily. So They work through the means They have arranged. It is exactly the same with the Sacraments of the Church—the Sacraments which the Christ ordained for His Church for example. He arranged certain ways through which His grace, His spiritual power, could most easily be poured out, and He expected His people to take advantage of these. There have been many people (it is part of what is called the Protestant spirit) who say: "Why should I need any means? I do not want anything between me and Him"—which of course involves the assumption that you are able to reach Him on the higher planes, a thing which is not so, which is not true in the least. And so people often decline these means which have been provided; they say: "I do not want anything of that sort, I can go straight to God," and perhaps sometimes you may evoke a Divine response in that way. Only, just think what you have done. If you look at it reasonably, you have put Him to much more than the necessary amount of trouble. In order to help you, He Himself has arranged the most easy and natural way, and yet some people

decline absolutely to take the help in that way. They say: "I am going to have a special outpouring of grace and salvation for myself and I won't share it with anyone else." If your love and devotion is real, yes, perhaps you will get something, but you will have caused much more trouble than was necessary. It is hardly worth while, you know; it is better for us to accept His method, than to insist that He should go out of His way to follow our methods.

All these things are very clear when once one understands the principles on which they work, but so very many people never try to understand the principles. They think that Nature must bow to them. There is a whole class of people who have that sort of idea. They won't have it in the way it is ordained; they will have something quite different; they will prescribe the conditions. They are in their way along the line of religion, like those investigators at spiritualistic séances, who want to prescribe the conditions under which manifestations should take place. It is a very silly attitude of mind, because we are only beginning to learn the rudiments of those great spiritual sciences. There is no line of investigation in the world in which you can prescribe what the laws of nature shall do.

You have heard of savages before whom electrical phenomena were shown, who declared that they were due to trickery. The savage Chief would say: "I see all this is connected by wires, you are doing it

with those wires. Cut them away and then I shall believe you." The electrician smiles in reply: "You do not understand the law; the wires conduct the electricity; without that the force could not come through." Then the man says: "I have exposed your trickery." They do the same thing at spiritualistic séances; they will not take the way ordained but want to strike out other ways. As I said, it is a disposition, a type, and a type which has certain good qualities; only it is often a very troublesome type. There is a certain amount of individuality about the idea of compelling God to do things in your way, which I suppose will recommend itself to some types of mind.

Frankly, it does not recommend itself to mine any more than does the idea of telling God what to do in prayer. I always profoundly feel that He knows so infinitely better than I do; and if, by any utterly inexplicable chance, He should change His intention on account of my asking Him, I know that I should be infinitely worse off under that scheme than I should have been under His own idea.

People will not take that point of view. They are always confident that they know best. It is the result of the development of the lower Manas. We must not grumble too much at it. We have spent a great many years in this sub-race of ours developing this thing we call a mind. It is not much of a mind really yet. "It is a poor thing, but mine own." We think

we have made it and that it is the greatest of all our possessions. We shall presently know that there are higher intellects than ours, and that the higher intellect generally knows better. It is simply the development of the lower Manas. You are trying to develop something higher—first of all, to develop the higher Manas, the Causal body, and then to develop the intuition, the Buddhic faculty. However little you may directly succeed in awakening these higher vibrations, the mere effort must help you to the attitude of synthesis rather than analysis, the attitude of readiness to accept that which comes from above rather than the attitude of protest against it, on the theory that you must be the higher and that therefore nothing can come to you from above, which is the line of partially developed intellect. Fully developed intellect would show you the truth. We have not reached that yet, but we are trying; only, in trying, it is well to recognise that and take an attitude of humility in the matter. We must obey our conscience, because, after all, it is all we have, but we must obey it with humility, with gentleness, recognising always that that which seems to us so clearly the best may after all not be so, and that therefore we must above all things avoid criticising other people, who, on these knotty points, may decide differently. It matters very much less which way you make up your own mind in a difficulty than it matters how you regard the people who take the other point of view. You

must sometimes make mistakes in your decisions as to the best way of doing a thing. If you have tried your best along your own line, you have done the best you could. The evil comes in when you begin to judge people who decide otherwise, and want to interfere with them. That is where you go wrong at once; that is where you cannot go right. The minute you begin to interfere with other people you are doing that which you should not do, but so long as you yourself earnestly and honestly do your best the fact that you make a mistake cannot be helped. It is a pity, but far better that you could make a mistake, and be kind-hearted and charitable about it, than that you should do right and be uncharitable and critical; because you will do more harm by that attitude than you would do good by your right decision. People often exaggerate the importance of the point that is to be decided at the minute. Judgment —that is a part of your evolution; but at the same time there are other things, besides these mental decisions, which are of vast importance. Your spiritual attitude, your loving-kindness and gentleness, these matter more than your being right, instead of wrong, in some particular thing which comes before you for decision.

Will, by all means, to be one with God. By the way, there is a point there, which may not have occurred to you, but which occurs very much to our brothers in India. These are the words of the Master Koot

Hoomi and He uses in this book several times that sort of phrase when He speaks of God. Now His previous incarnation was an Indian Teacher named Nagarjuna, and in that incarnation He made many great speeches and wrote a great deal, much of which still remains to us. In those writings and speeches He is very strongly opposed to any idea of personality in the Deity. He objects even to the use of that word or that name, and goes deeply into metaphysical questions of all sorts. Indians, knowing all that philosophy of Nagarjuna, have often said: "How curious it is in this little book our Master, who had spoken so strongly against personality in the Deity, should now use that word God. The Lord Buddha also spoke very strongly against anything like personality in the Deity." Well, of course, the answer to that objection is this: in this book the Master is not going into the question of the Absolute; He is not speaking of THAT—the Supreme, the Eternal. You see, He is speaking now to a young disciple. In those days, as Nagarjuna, He was speaking to students who were, perhaps, thoroughly versed in philosophy and metaphysics, in many systems of the Indian Philosophy, and so He spoke strongly against any endeavour to degrade the conception of the Deity by making it personal in any way. He is here speaking primarily to an Indian boy. What would that mean to the ordinary Indian boy? Of course it would mean Ishvara that is, the Solar Logos, the Solar

Deity, and it is in that sense undoubtedly that our Master uses the word "God" here. But, as I say, many people have rebelled against it. So it is well you should understand.

Then He says: "You must make yourself like Him." Now what do we know of Him? We know that He manifests Himself through three aspects: Will or Power, Wisdom, and Love or Activity. Now, some approach Him through one of these aspects and some through another. Our way is the way of Activity, because that is the way of our Masters. That is a point you have to understand. You have heard much about the Seven Great Rays and you know that one of them is the line of Devotion, and that another is the line of Wisdom, and another that of Power or Will. But really there are many ways. Remember that in all these Rays there are sub-divisions, there are sub-rays, as it were. Take the case of Devotion. You can quite easily see you may have three types or kinds of that devotion. You may have the devotion which I suppose we may call the pure devotion, the devotion which has nothing else in it. The devotee, of this type casts himself down, as it were, before the Object of his adoration, and just wishes to become one with It—his only object is that. I suppose you find that type in our western races only among some few monks and nuns whose desire is simply to spend themselves in perpetual adoration of the Deity. That is a

splendid thing, but if you will think of it, you will see that, for the moment at any rate, the man is not thinking of others; he is not concerned with the great orphan Humanity at all; he is thinking only of becoming one with the Deity. If you ask him about others—he will say: "Let them do what I am doing." I know that is the answer I have had, given to me by Bhaktas in India. There are many there, you know. I know one man, a very good example, whose one idea was just precisely that—to sit in adoration before the image of his Deity and to try to become one with Him. That is the future he puts before himself and it is the future he will gain. He will spend the whole of his heaven life, probably a very long one, thousands of years, in just precisely that—in a sort of swoon of adoration. He will spend himself in that way. Of course that means development for his various vehicles and a certain advance to himself. But I do not think that purely devotional method would commend itself to even the most devotional among you. Why not? Because you have this other undercurrent. You have the desire for service; and therefore, if you are devotional, then you want to express your devotion in that way. You see, you may be purely devoted and think of nothing but the Deity. You may have a lower devotion which demands a *quid pro quo* from the Deity, which says: "If you will pay me so much in the way of riches and promotion and general assistance, I will

give you so much devotion." There is a great deal of that kind of devotion in the world.

Then there is the third kind, which I think would be yours, if any of you are strongly devotional—which says: " I love that Great One, or that Teacher, so much that, because of that and in His name, I must be doing something to help others to know Him and to understand Him as I do. I must do good works in His name." Now that is a very noble and a very practical kind of devotion, and if any of you are on the devotional ray, well, you will not be purely devotional, you will have this variant of activity which will make you want to do something on account of your devotion. Just so, if any of you be on the line of Wisdom, which wishes above all things to know, you will have the same streak running across the character. There are those who desire to become wise merely in order to heap up wisdom, merely in order to know and to understand. That is a very wonderful quality in a man. He must understand a thing, he must get to the root of it. These are the men who make great progress in the knowledge of nature. There may be among you some who have that intense desire for knowledge and—because you are Servers—that will be crossed by this other feeling and you will get the complex result: " I want knowledge, but I want it only that I may be useful." You would see very strongly the mistakes made by other people, who, although they desire with all their hearts

to serve yet, because of foolishness, do more harm than good. That is the result of the lack of knowledge. "Let me have perfect knowledge; then I can really serve well."

On whatever line you may be, you will have this streak of Service, which is itself a line of which those others are sub-divisions; and so in each of these there is the sub-division of devoting oneself to Service. At any rate it is that sub-division of Service, it is that line of activity which we all ought to be taking. Why should we take that line more than any other? It is because these Great Ones take it. That is most emphatically Their line. The Master Jesus is very emphatically the Head of all true devotees, ånd yet you will find that His teaching is also activity. The Head of all the Wisdom in the World, and of those who are aiming at it, is the Lord Buddha. But if you read the Noble Eight-Fold Path, you will find that one of the steps of the Path is Right Exertion. He will tell you very plainly that merely to study and dream about the attainment of Wisdom is useless. You must be doing something useful; for only in that way can you hope to attain.

So we shall wish to become one with God, not merely that we may be one with Him and bask, as it were, in all that glory and in all that joy, but we want to be one with Him that we may act as He does; and His great action, you know, was to pour Himself out in utmost self-sacrifice into matter, in order that

you might come into being. Therefore he who will be one with God must himself show forth that spirit of utter self-sacrifice, of the utter forgetting of himself for the sake of the work which is to be done, for the God who is all Love.

XXVII

July 27, 1915.

BEFORE I went away we were at the beginning of this fourth qualification which is said to be the most necessary of all—the qualification of Love:

> Because He is Love, you, if you would become one with Him, must be filled with perfect unselfishness and love also.

In connection with that you should note the sentence just before that, "but in order that because of your deep love for Him you may act with Him and as He does". That is very prominent all through this book—the practical nature of its teaching. If it gives us any instructions it invariably adds at once that they must be put into practice and some words to show us how they must be put into practice.

There is a line of approach by devotion only, you know, which is without necessarily any action, or at any rate any action on the physical plane. That is, however, not at all the line which is advocated here. There may be among us men of devotion, indeed I hope there are, but our devotion will be such

as must find its expression in definitely doing something for the sake of Him to whom we are devoted. It will not be the pure devotion which desires only to merge itself in its Deity. We do not find that in this band of Servers to which we belong. We were born with this idea of Service, it is, as it were, the distinguishing mark of the Monad, his greatest characteristic, that he devoted himself to service of some sort, to somebody, and therefore the necessity of action.

You will find that all our Masters are on that line of action. The Deity, you see, is Will, Wisdom and Love in His Three Manifestations. There are men who approach Him along each, and there are men among us, among our great leaders, who approach Him along each of these lines, but always with that qualification that, by whichever way they may approach Him, it leads them always to action, so that it is not abstract devotion, it is not abstract wisdom, but it is, as it were, applied devotion, applied wisdom. Similarly the love must not be a mere feeling, however beautiful and magnificent, but a feeling which results in something definite.

We have had three books, more or less of this kind, dealing with discipleship. I do not mean those which our President herself has written, *The Path of Discipleship* and *In the Outer Court*, beautiful as those are; but we have had given to us by the teaching of the Masters three separate books; one in

1885, *Light on the Path*; another in 1889, *The Voice of the Silence*; and then an interval of more than twenty years before this book comes before us in 1911.

Now each of those books of ethics has its own characteristics. Both of those older books are far more poetical than this, although in this also there are two or three very beautiful expressions—it could not be otherwise since it comes from our Master Koot Hoomi. Nevertheless these others are far more poetical, far more filled with symbology, but this is not only as simple as words can make it, it is also severely practical.

The three books apply to different stages. The book, *Light on the Path*, we are told, has several meanings one behind the other. The highest of these meanings is supposed to carry us to what is called the Initiation of the Maha-Chohan, a stage beyond where even our Masters stand. But on the other hand it has an interpretation which is applicable to us down here at the present time. *The Voice of the Silence*, which comes next, carries us as far as the Arhat Initiation. Very near the end you get the words, "A new Arhat is born"; so evidently it is intended to carry us that far. This book, *At the Feet of the Master*, goes only up to the First Initiation. Not only was this, as I told you in the beginning, addressed to a boy of thirteen, wherefore it had to be so wonderfully simple, but also that boy

himself had a severely practical mind. Always it was his instinct to ask: "Well, what is to be done about that thing?" If you explained to him the necessity for acquiring certain qualifications and so on, he would say: "Yes, and when you have them, what do you do with them?" That was his line. So between these two things we have the very remarkable result of this little book, so plain and so essentially practical. So, really, though the others are far more poetical, this is a very great boon and of great assistance to the man who is earnestly trying to follow the Way. If one must have only one small book with one, this is the book I recommend, distinctly. I think in its way there is nothing quite like it. The others we shall consider in due course, but I think this has its own peculiar place because of that intense practicality. That comes out here: "If you want to be one with God, you must act with Him and as He does." Then He goes on to say: "In daily life it means so-and-so," at once explaining how you may apply the thing. That sentence: "You, if you would become one with Him, must be filled with perfect unselfishness and love" also really epitomises the whole Path. It means so much. The more you think of it, the more you will see in those few simple words, because, if your unselfishness is perfect, then you never think of yourself at all in anything that you do. If what you do brings no obvious visible result here on the

physical plane, you will not in the least be disturbed; you have done your best. The work was done for the sake of others. If you were looking for result or reward you would be thinking of yourself; and so you would be falling short of the perfect unselfishness. He who is perfectly unselfish can never be wounded or hurt by anything that is said or done; a person who has a feeling which can be hurt is thinking of himself. Now to have feelings is human nature; but you know, if you want to succeed along this line, you must to that extent become superhuman. You are aiming at becoming something more than the average man, and that is precisely one of the ways—that you must not have any feelings that can be hurt or wounded. It means that you are thinking of yourself, and you must not think of yourself.

The perfect love which is to be held towards every one involves so much. A few words later on we shall come to the sins against love: Gossip, Cruelty and Superstition. But if your love were perfect, you would never be cruel, you would never gossip, because you would take care not to discuss the faults or failings of one you love,—certainly never to anybody else, which is the essence of gossip. Just as you would not publish abroad the failings of your own son, so you would not publish abroad the failings of anybody else's son. There is no more far-reaching sentence than that—that perfect love and perfect unselfishness practically cover the whole ground.

True, there must be wisdom as well, because the perfect love would make you acquire the perfect wisdom in order that you may deal in the best and wisest way with anyone whom you wish to serve. Each one of these things, carried to the ultimate, involves the others. You would use your will in connection with it, you would see the necessity of developing your will so that you could overcome in yourself any failings which made you not quite what you wish to be towards the object of your love; so it is really true that "Love is the fulfilling of the law." If you have that one thing, it will make you acquire all the rest, so that that one sentence is very well-worth while remembering as a kind of motto: "If you would become one with Him, you must be filled with perfect love and unselfishness also." The perfect love could never see evil, for perfect love would always see the best and highest meaning in everything that was done, and in that way would in all probability generally be right, because most people after all are acting from motives which to them seem high and good, even though they may not seem so to us. It is very much the custom of the world to attribute the lowest motive. One is nearly always mistaken in doing that.

Then you see:

> In daily life this means two things; first, that you shall be careful to do no hurt to any living thing; second, that you shall always be watching for an opportunity to help.

Of course, those are two sides of the same thing, the passive and the active, as it were—passive, that you shall do no hurt; active, that you shall do good. People often say (those who do not know them well) that the Oriental religions are negative—that they tell you not to do evil, but that they do not order any particular action. It has been said that the idea of service which we import into them is in reality a Christian idea. Well, that is not so. It is true that, in Christianity, that was expressed and emphasised very strongly. It is not unfortunately so strongly emphasised by the modern Christian. In the original Christianity it stood out. "Let him that is greatest among you be as he that doth serve." But you will find the same idea in the older religions too, if you will only look for it.

Buddhism—people always speak of that as the most negative of religions—certainly does give you directions as to the things you must avoid. It has its Five Commandments—though that is not a good name—which take the place of the Jewish Ten Commandments; only the Jewish Commandments are what their names implies; they say: "Thou shalt not." The Buddhist religion does not say: "Thou shalt not," though it asks its people to promise to try to avoid certain things. To call them the Five Commandments is quite wrong, there is no command about them. The wording is: "I observe the teaching to refrain from doing so-and-so . . . I observe

the precept to refrain from taking life; to refrain from taking that which does not belong to me; to refrain from any unlawful exhibition of lust; to refrain from saying that which is not true; to refrain from intoxicating drinks or stupefying drugs." That is the form; it is not a command but a promise, and the man is asked to take this and he does take it. But although that is negative, there is a good deal that is far from negative. You will find that the Buddha preaches the Noble Eight-Fold Path. One of the steps of that Path is "Right Exertion". It is not enough to abstain from doing evil, but the man must endeavour to do good. You will see that in the summary of that religion:

1. Cease to do evil.
2. Learn to do well.
3. Cleanse your own heart.

That is the religion of the Buddhas.

So you see, it is not a merely passive thing, there is active teaching there.

The same in Hinduism; men are told there to abstain from all sorts of things. They are hedged round with all sorts of restrictions, but also they are told to practise good works and charity. Indeed, you must remember in another of the great parallel books to this, it is said that inaction in a deed of mercy may mean action in a deadly sin—that to refrain from action when you clearly ought to act is itself a very sad thing indeed.

But the idea that those religions are chiefly passive and not active probably comes very largely from the extent to which they magnify meditation, from the fact that they proclaim that the life of the yogi, who lives quite away from the world, is ethically the highest life. But you must remember that after all Christianity too has that. The life of the monk or the nun was always considered the highest or noblest. It is only in later days that we have come to take a different view. In the intensity of our activity in this fifth sub-race of the Fifth Root Race we are perhaps secretly inclined to despise the monk or the nun and magnify rather the man of action, the great commander in war, the great ruler or statesman in peace; and, thinking as we do, we are right there according to our lights. Thinking, as we do, almost entirely on the physical plane, we think best of the man who has done great things on the physical plane; whereas the great work of the monk or the nun would be done on the higher plane. The whole idea of the Contemplative Orders is a very beautiful one, only it has very often failed of realisation and so it has not been generally understood. The idea was that the Active Orders of the monk and the friar would perform acts of charity and all sorts of good work on the physical plane, and would preach to the people, and generally speaking carry on the active side of the religion; while the Contemplative Orders, who shut themselves up and were never seen of men

at all, would devote themselves wholly to meditation and supplication. Translating it into our language, that would mean the formation of good and high thought and the sending of it out with a definite view to the helping of people. Such Orders prayed for the whole world, you remember. It was their business to make a speciality of prayer and meditation, and to do it for their brethren, who to a large extent, because of their work and other reasons, were unable to do it so well and so thoroughly for themselves. They were a part of humanity, supplying a need of humanity. That was the theory of the thing. They were not merely lazy monks retiring from active work, as was supposed. That was not the idea; but that those people were doing very much harder work in connection with higher planes which others could not do, and doing it, generally, under circumstances of self-abnegation and asceticism which would simply frighten the ordinary man. So one must not misunderstand the original intention of a scheme like that.

The same thing precisely was the intention of the yogi in India. It failed among the Christians and among the Hindus, just as it failed among the Buddhists; the thing has failed to some extent. Unworthy people have joined these Orders. It is quite obvious that the life of the monk, when it was not so definitely ascetic, might be made a comfortable, lazy sort of life to the man who used it only to

escape from doing physical work and did not substitute the work of the higher planes. Of course there were many who did that. In the same way there are those among the Buddhist monks, at whom their fellows rather sneer, calling them "Rice Monks"—men who are monks for the sake of the assured living, not a very luxurious one; but among the Buddhists there is an assured living for every monk—a living which will never fail while, say, one in the country has any food at all, and for the sake of making sure of that, without doing any work for it, there are some who have joined that great Order. But after all only a very few.

The same thing was true perhaps, in a somewhat greater degree, of the monastic orders of the middle ages in Europe. There were people who joined them for the sake of the power and influence, and did not mind in many cases the lack of possessions. For though the individual monk did not have possessions, the monastery as a body did acquire a very great deal which was at the disposal of the individual to a large extent. So that they lived luxuriously enough, I do not doubt. But the original intention was not at all that; that was only a defection from the original idea.

We who are decidedly on the line of action must beware that we do not find ourselves secretly rather despising the man of pure devotion, who, as we say, does nothing on the physical plane.

Then He says:

> First, to do no hurt. Three sins there are which work more harm than all else in the world—gossip, cruelty, and superstition—because they are sins against love. Against these three the man who would fill his heart with the love of God must watch ceaselessly.

When you hear that three sins there are which work more harm than all others, naturally you think of murder and robbery and things of that sort, and perhaps wonder to find these comparatively ordinary things, gossip, cruelty and superstition put at the head of the list. But you have to take into account the quality as well as the amount of them existing in the world. Murder and robbery are universally recognised as serious sins, and consequently you get comparatively little of them, unless you dignify them by the name of war;—then you get any amount. But using the ordinary terms, there is not much of such things, as they are universally reprobated by everybody. But gossip, for example—see how universal that is in the outer world! And if you think of the harm it does in any individual case, of the great amount of mental suffering which it may cause, and of the depreciation of ideals which it often brings about, and then if you multiply that by the millions of cases which are going on all the time, you will very soon see that it does do more harm than the other apparently greater crimes. The few isolated murders do not work so much harm as gossip. You have the gossip of millions, and the

murders are only a few; so that it is quite true that, in the aggregate, more harm is done.

Think of a few cases which we ourselves know. Take the cases of our great Founder, Madame Blavatsky, and her successor, our present President, and you will see what has been done by gossip. A great deal of gossip was started about Madame Blavatsky. All kinds of mad and wild accusations were brought against her. They were utterly ridiculous to us who knew her personally, but they did not appear equally ridiculous to those who did not know her; and because of that, I suppose, we can hardly estimate how many thousands of people may have been prevented from coming to her and learning from her, as they otherwise might have done. I suppose the interest excited by Theosophy has been very much wider, many scores of times wider than is testified by the number of those who have joined the Theosophical Society. I have personally known of scores of people who have been put off from further examination of it by stories about Madame Blavatsky. To this day, although she died in 1891, it is quite a common thing, if you speak to anybody about the Theosophical Society, to be met by the remark; "Oh, yes, that was founded by Madame Blavatsky, and she was exposed long ago as a fraud, as a charlatan." So there is that gossip living after all these years, and still continuing to do harm, still keeping people from taking the advantage which

otherwise they would probably have taken of the teaching which she left behind her. It is of course, utterly irrational. One does not defend the person who takes that attitude. They say that, if she were fraudulent, then what she said was not likely to be true. In a general way that argument has something in its favour, but the first thing is to see what is the teaching, and to ask whether it is true. I know that the stories were false, because I knew her exceedingly well. But though I have never hesitated to say so in the most definite and decided way, I generally also add: "But supposing it all had been true, what does it matter? Theosophy is not false even though the charges are true. The teaching of Theosophy still remains the finest explanation in existence of all the problems of life." But people do not see that. They won't go any further because mud has been cast upon the character of the Founder;—unjustly cast, but as to that they pay no attention.

The same thing has happened with our great President. She has been attacked all her life long. I think I know no one who has been more frequently and more foully attacked than she. Long before she came into Theosophy at all she was before the public as a teacher of free thought. She was attacked and vilified first because of a certain pamphlet written long before she was born, but which she published when it was given up under threat of prosecution on subjects which every one has to think about, but

which very few venture to talk about. With her characteristic boldness she republished it, was prosecuted, and, after a *nolle prosequi* was issued, she wrote a more carefully worded pamphlet on the subject. Her reward for that was to have her personal character vilified in the most abominable manner, and without any foundation, merely on the supposition that a person who wrote a pamphlet on such a subject must necessarily be an abominable person—a truly ridiculous idea. She since, at Mme. Blavatsky's wish, withdrew the pamphlet, as not the most spiritual way of dealing with the difficulty. But she has never, I am sure, regretted that she did her best to deal with the facts as she saw them. Only now she says, with the greater knowledge that has come to her, that she was approaching the problem in the materialistic way. But the point is the evil that all that gossip did. Her enemies set on foot—maliciously set on foot—all sorts of attacks upon her personal character. The consequence was that many people, who had previously admired her very greatly, as indeed they might well do, had their ideal destroyed and taken from them. It is a terrible thing to destroy a person's ideal, to cheapen it and lower it, to make him feel that after all it is not so good, or so high, or so noble, as he thought. They talk of the destruction of ideals as a great and good thing. The destruction of a person's ideal may be the most serious evil you can do him. If he idealises something which

to your idea is low and mean, you may perhaps be able to lead him to some higher ideal, but it is a most evil and most wicked thing to take away from a man his ideal, without leaving him something higher and better to take its place. You should never take away a man's ideal; but instead of that you should try to put before him something so much higher that that in its turn will attract him, and presently he may come to see that there are flaws in the other. It is not for you to point out the flaws, it is not for you to try to belittle anyone under any circumstances.

You know, many of you probably by personal experience, what a wonderful amount of good our President has done to people who came to her. I am not thinking only of all that has been done by her published books, of the thousands who have seen the light through what she wrote. I am thinking also of the thousands who write to her and ask her advice about all sorts of difficulties and problems in which they find themselves. How many people have been prevented from applying for such advice by these evil reports that have been circulated about her! You may begin to see, perhaps, what immeasurable harm may be done by spiteful and foolish gossip, and so you will see our Master is quite right when He classes it as one of the greatest of the crimes in the world.

Then of course, gossip very much hurts the feelings of the person at whom it is aimed. As I said, if you are

perfect you have no feelings that can be hurt. But most of us are not perfect. We are still a long way from perfection, and therefore evil gossip still hurts us. It is a weakness that the person can be hurt, but you have to consider that fact after all that it does not excuse you from provoking this evil among you.

As to superstition—yes, of course it is obvious that that leads to all sorts of trouble. History shows us the frightful things that have been caused by superstition. I suppose the dictionary would define it as "false and foolish belief". The President very frequently says it is the taking of the unessential for the essential—the magnifying of the unessential into the essential. Well, so it is. It is a very good definition though, perhaps, it does not cover the whole ground. You know how that has worked out in history. What frightful persecutions there have been because of the delusions of superstition. The whole of the work of the Inquisition, the whole of the extraordinary abominations which were committed in its name, came from this superstition that people must believe and must act in a certain way and in that way only. It is difficult for us to believe that the horrors of the Inquisition could have been permitted by men with any spark of proper feeling or decent thought anywhere about them. Yet you know they were the logical result of their own horrible superstitions. They had this superstition, which cannot be characterised in words strong enough to describe it,

that unless men pronounced their particular Shibboleth, unless they followed along the particular line which they taught, such men would be burned for ever hereafter. Now if anybody really does believe that (impossible though it may seem to us) then he would be justified in trying any means whatever by which he could save his fellows from such eternal burning. He would be justified if, by burning him here and now for a short time on the physical plane, he could save him from burning for ever hereafter. If the people really believed that, all the horrible tortures would be justified. It is a very remarkable fact that they seemed to hold that it did not matter what the heretic really thought, but only that they could force him to *say* that he believed in their particular doctrines. I presume no one was forced by this abomination into any belief whatever, but only may have been forced to say that he believed it. If you could only be got to pronounce certain words, the prison doors opened before you. If that were true, the Inquisition is justified, but it is not true. It is difficult for us to escape from the conviction that they really knew, and for political or personal ends pretended the necessity for this belief. I do not think this was so. I think the people were just as genuinely deluded about that as some people are about the Sunday superstition. In Scotland, for instance, there are people who believe that one day of the week is different, and that things that would be praiseworthy

on any other day would be wicked on Sunday. It is a state of mind that has nothing to do with logic or any of the exact sciences, but nevertheless it appears to exist. That is one example of what superstition has done.

The Crusades were another mighty superstition. Because of a story, which had no foundation in fact, as to the life and death of the Teacher Jesus, twenty millions of men lost their lives in those Crusades, trying to get into Christian hands the country where this life-story of an Initiate was supposed to have been lived. If they could have been brought to understand that it was the life-story of an Initiate, and that it had been lived in every country in the world at one time or another, all that loss of life might have been avoided. Perhaps it was not an entire loss, because by going out to fight with the more enlightened Saracens they brought back some useful information into Europe. Of course the fact that the people died for an ideal counted to them for righteousness. Any child might have seen that the thing was all a delusion, yet the fact that they went out and died was in itself a noble act. And so after all, much as we may regret the superstition which led to such a waste of life, even that, we can see, was used for good.

Then the Muhammadans again for the sake of their particular superstition have slain thousands and thousands, have spread bloodshed and slaughter over

vast tracts of Asia, Europe and Africa. This superstition has been a very terrible thing. There is no religion except the Buddhist which has never persecuted. That is a very fine record. Of Buddhism alone that is true. It has never persecuted any other religion; it could not, because of its inherent principles. It is bound to toleration by the very words of its Founder, because the question is, who is a Buddhist? A Buddhist is a man who follows the teaching of the Lord Buddha, not a man who believes this or that, but a man who lives as the Lord Buddha said he ought to. You might be a Hindu and a Christian, or anything else you liked, because the only test of a Buddhist is the life the man leads. That question arises continually in the East. You ask a missionary what will become of the really good Buddhist, and he will answer: "Well, if he does not believe in Christ, there is no hope for him"; or, at the best, they leave him to the uncovenanted mercies of God, if he is a very good man. If you ask a Buddhist the same question about a very good Christian, he will say: "He is quite a Buddhist. He calls himself a Christian; but as he is following the teachings of the Lord Buddha he is quite all right." That is the only religion which has not persecuted.

The superstition is not only bad for the person himself, but it always leads to interference with other people. Where there has been a prominent superstition it has led to an attempt to coerce other people.

Sunday in Scotland, for example, leads to a distinct coercion of other people. People who do on Sunday things which are considered ordinary and rational on any other day of the week, are looked upon with very great suspicion. Always, even although it is an inherently ridiculous superstition, it leads to intolerance. It is not quite easy to avoid these things; but He says here: "Against these three the man must watch ceaselessly." That is a very strong expression. He must watch ceaselessly against these things. You would think it was fairly easy to avoid them, but it is not ; and the reason why they are so painfully common is that everybody about us is in the habit and never thinks anything about it. It comes to us like so many other things, because of the place at which we stand in evolution. We have been developing the lower, and not the higher mind ; and the lower mind looks first for the points on which another person thinks differently from itself. That is the line of development of the lower manas and, because of that, people are led to notice first the things which they do not like, the things which are different, and then they comment upon them,—which of course they need not do, but it very commonly follows. So you see, while it is our business to fight against this idea of gossip, to resist it, to speak against it and so on, yet we need not be surprised that it is so common. It is like selfishness which millions of years ago was a necessity when we were coming up through the savages; it

was part of our evolution and necessary for our development. The man who is selfish now is an anachronism, he is out of date, he is clinging to that old custom, when it is very bad and not at all good. Just in the same way the man who is devoting all his energies to picking holes and finding differences is out of date. He has not realised that he is out of date, that the world has passed beyond that stage, that we ought to be studying synthesis and trying to find the Divine and the good in everything, since we ought now to be beginning to develop the Buddhi and not merely the Manas. We, who are Theosophists, are trying to live for to-morrow and not for yesterday—trying to keep a little in advance of the times; therefore we must not let ourselves be swept away by this great tide of ignorant obscurantism. But, in order to do this, we have constantly to remind ourselves that we must not give way; otherwise the stream will so surround and press upon us that we shall find ourselves doing as other people do. Therefore the Master is, as ever, right when He says that against these things the disciple must watch ceaselessly.

XXVIII

1915.

We were speaking of gossip, cruelty and superstition. It seems as though it would be easy to avoid these things—very easy, for example, not to gossip; but it is not, you know. The Master says that you must watch ceaselessly, and that is absolutely true, because this talking, this critical attitude about other people, is so very much ingrained in our present civilisation that you have to keep continually on the watch against it. You have to set yourself quite definitely to see that you do not do this thing. The weight of public opinion, of public custom, is an enormous force which is not generally recognised at all. When you talk about public opinion, you think naturally of what people will say about you, or what they say on any given subject. It is not nearly so much what people might say, whether about you or about some subject under discussion, but it is what they think. The vast weight of the thought of thousands, perhaps of millions of people, is steadily pressing upon your mental body all the time. It is exceedingly difficult for you to make it vibrate in any other direction with regard to any other matter than that in which the bodies of all

those other people are vibrating. We do not recognise that as a regular thing. We do not understand that there is always this occult force at work; but it is a very real thing, and in a case like this, of a thing which is a universal custom, is cropping up constantly every day. Somebody will say something to you which comes under this head; it is the most natural thing in the world to take it up and reply and let the discussion go on for a while. Well, we ought not to do that. It is very difficult indeed to avoid this; it is unquestionably an exaggeration of a faculty which we have been developing. We are in the fifth sub-race of the Fifth Root Race; our special business has been the development of the lower mind. The function of the lower mind is to discriminate between things by their differences. If it is comparing two things it looks first of all for the differences between them. If some new book comes before you, if anything new comes before you, the things you distinctly look for first are the points in which it differs from your own ideas. Theoretically we ought to look first for the points of agreement, but we do not as a rule, because our whole impetus, the entire momentum, is the other way. For thousands of years we have been developing this discriminative power, and we apply it in all sorts of ways in which it would be very much better if we did not. So our very word "critical" has come to mean picking holes. It is derived from the Greek, and should

mean the same thing as the word " judicial," which is derived from the Latin; but you know it does not. We have got into this habit of picking holes, and we do it with people, with characters, with everything. It is natural—yes, to the last degree natural—only it is an anachronism. At least it is so for us. We have chosen to differ so far from the rest of the world as to have come into the Theosophical Society, and we are, in that respect, not behind the times, but in advance of them. Instead of looking behind and doing what we ought to have done some thousands of years ago, we ought to be trying to do that thing which will be our work in the future. Now the next development will be that of the Buddhi—what we call intuition. Then we shall develop the power of synthesising rather than analysing. We shall look for the underlying Divinity, the underlying unity of everything first, before we look for the differences. It is at that we ought to be aiming. So if we find ourselves showing the critical spirit, we ought to pull ourselves up, and say: " Here, that is the work of the past." You cannot blame the man in the outer world for it, for after all it is the same thing as is selfishness; that is another anachronism. A man who is still selfish is simply hopelessly behind the times. Similarly with one who is critical. You cannot wonder at it in the outer world; only, if we wish to make ourselves in this respect a little different from our fellows in order that we may be able to help

them better, it is just one of the things we must drop. To change the habit of thousands of years is hard; still its time is past, so let us go ahead and do it. The Master is quite right in saying that we must watch ceaselessly. The line along which our race has developed is very strongly stamped upon us. You see here how our Master has devoted several pages to this question of gossip, to explaining its evil very clearly and fully. There is very little we may add to these pages; comment seems to be superfluous. The whole thing is said for you there.

I will give you a little instance of gossip, connected with this very book. I remember, I was very much impressed when I first heard these teachings given to Alcyone, long before this book was published, by the immense importance the Master attached to this question of gossip. I repeated it; I quoted what He had said in various meetings in India, so that all this information was in the minds of numbers of people before this book was published. Now many of the members rather objected to the book; they rather objected to the whole theory, to the idea of the Star, and the Coming Teacher, and to the precision with which we were able to say that He would soon come; that He would take this or that body. Many felt doubtful about all that, and one thing that they immediately pounced upon was that these statements had been made months before this book was published; therefore they said that part of it must have been

my work. I was present when the teaching was given; quite a number of the statements impressed themselves very strongly upon me, and I repeated them with the idea of sharing them with our brothers, naturally enough, not knowing then that they were to be published as a book. When people get a little twist they distort everything. Then again in describing the work of Alcyone for his Master, I remember explaining to the people that there were two stages in his development; there was a time, at first, when he could not remember clearly what was said to him and I had to repeat it over again to him in his physical body in the morning. There again people thought that this book belonged to that stage. It did not in the least; it belonged to the later stage, when he was able to remember and write down for himself; but people attribute things to whatever will fit in with their preconceived ideas, and so often are exceedingly unjust.

I have suffered from all sorts of injustice and misconception; I do not mind in the least, but it gives me a very definite idea as to how easy it is for people to misunderstand when they start with a wrong idea. I have seen some really ludicrous mistakes about some quite ordinary idea and every circumstance that occurred was fitted in to bolster up that idea, the whole thing being simply imagination from beginning to end. After one has seen that happen two or three times, one begins to be a little careful.

Then you find out more and more how very easy it is to take things wrongly. Most especially a person who thinks much about himself will take everything very wrongly. I have had example after example of that. One says something of quite a general nature. Some person, unable to believe that anyone can be thinking or speaking of anyone but of him, naturally takes it as personal. The harm done by such misunderstanding is almost infinite.

The only thing that we can do is to be exceedingly careful not to assign motives or meanings to what other people say. Take what they say, and put the best construction you can upon it. Generally speaking, you will be right in doing so; sometimes, perhaps, you may be wrong. It is a thousand times better that you should be wrong twenty times, a hundred times, in thinking well of a person, than that you should even once be wrong in thinking ill. Therefore one should be careful not to impute motives.

One of the experiments we have to make in the course of training is to identify ourselves with the consciousness of certain animals. It is merely a question of practice. A pupil is set to do that in order that he may be able to learn later on how to do the same thing with other and higher consciousnesses. Now we consider ourselves very far superior to any kind of animal—and rightly, because we belong to a higher kingdom. It should therefore be perfectly simple for us to understand the mind of that animal.

Yet, from the experience I have had of the thing, I suppose everybody who pays any attention to animals must be misrepresenting the animals' ideas and motives all the time. When you really find out why an animal thinks in a particular way, you discover that it is for reasons which you would never have thought of at all.

If that occurs with animals, whose lines of thought are few and simple, it is much more likely to be so when we come to deal with men. We are nearer to the human being of course, and in that way we are less likely to misunderstand. But I doubt very much whether any human being ever understands another human being at all. It is very true, strange as it may sound, that we are all of us isolated, that each stands by himself. There is another way in which it is true that we are a mighty brotherhood; yet, as far as our minds are concerned, each lives in a tower of his own, and the circumference of his consciousness touches the circumference of another man's consciousness only at a point, and doubtfully and uncertainly at that. An attempt really to understand the motives of another man, and to follow him out in his line of reasoning, is very unlikely to be correct; therefore the least we can do is to give the man the benefit of the doubt. Most people have a good deal of good in them; most people are on the whole much better than you think. I have had to move among the worst specimens of humanity down

in Holborn, with Mr. Maconachie of S. Albans. I know the kind of thing which is thought and said and done by the very dregs of the criminal classes down there in London. I never met one who had not the Divine spark, which showed that he was still a man. If it is true of those, it is a thousand times more true of all the people you meet every day, who are, on the whole, quite respectable and well-meaning people. Give them, therefore, the credit of the best meaning. If you are wrong, your slightly higher, slightly better thought about them will act upon them and actually do them good. It is true that, if you think well, you are actually helping them. The clairvoyant can see the thoughts of one person going to another and buzzing round him like a cloud of mosquitoes. They cannot get in while he is occupied by some other matter, while he is thinking strongly of anything ; but when his thought for the moment slackens, when he is, perhaps rather meditative, perhaps tired, perhaps a little absent-minded for the moment, then the thing comes in.

This is one of the great evils of this very gossip. You know the Master tells you, a little later on, that if, as happens in most cases, what you think is not true, then your thought may actually make him what you think. For your thought suggests the idea, and if there be something in him which responds—and after all there are the remnants of ancient ill in all of us, it may stir up a trifling relic of evil, or, if it is

a good thought, much good. I have seen cases (I wish you could see them as I have seen them) in which an evil thought about a man led to a course of evil action on his part, the results of which would last for many lives, because here was a condition which to a certain extent responded to it in the man's mind. It was, as it were, near the surface, but it had not materialised itself in action. Then there came an evil thought from some one else, which gave just the push which sent him over from thought to action, and committed him to a course of crime. Surely there is a great responsibility for the man who did that. You can all see that a little impetus given to another might not matter so much sometimes, but in some cases it might make all the difference in the world. Schoolboys running about often push one another, push a boy on the edge of a precipice so that he goes over. You never know when a man's thought may be on the edge of some evil course of action; when he may be just balanced as it were, and one evil thought about him may just push him over. On the other hand, when a man is in that way balanced between good and evil, one strong helpful good thought may push him definitely on to the good side and set him going on a career which will mean for him rapid development. Only the responsibility of the thought, of the word, is a very serious one. I suppose we may talk about it and write about it; but until you see those thought-forms going out, until you develop

the faculty which enables you to see the push given, the results produced, I suppose you will never be able to realise it; but see it once, and you will be careful, with a care born of horror. At the same time remember what the poet Schiller wrote about clairvoyance, when he spoke of the horror of the thing; how he desired the welcome blindness of the sense again. "Take back your cruel gift; take back this dreadful gift," was what he said. There are many things which are not pleasant to see. You get a new sense of the responsibilities of life if you see a few things.

When you hear an unpleasant story about anyone, or a reflection cast upon anyone, just think whether you would repeat that reflection, whether you would send it on and magnify it if it were about your son. No, you would not. You would combat it in the first place, and be very careful to say nothing about it. Why should you act differently about some one else's son? It is a point worth thinking of, you know.

Well, as I say, there is not much to add to what the Master says here about this matter of gossip:

> See what gossip does. It begins with evil thought, and that in itself is a crime. For in every one and in everything there is good; in every one and in everything there is evil. Either of these we can strengthen by thinking of it, and in this way we can help or hinder evolution; we can do the will of the Logos or we can resist Him. If you think of the evil in another you are doing at the same time three wicked things.

You notice the strength of the language used; it is absolutely definite. He speaks of the thing as a

crime; of these things as wicked. Remember how measured, how exceedingly careful and balanced is the speech of a Master always. If He uses strong words, you may be very sure that He means them utterly, that it is not under the access of a momentary impulse of irritation that he is saying these things. He says them because He sees and knows that they are worthy of such emphasis as this. Then He says:

> You are filling your neighbourhood with evil thought instead of with good thought, and so you are adding to the sorrow of the world.

The world is, you know, very much to us what we make of it. If you are pessimistic, if you are looking for the wrong side of things, if you are looking for a chance to be offended, or to be hurt, if you are bent upon finding evil and darkness, well, you can find it. There is evil, there is darkness, there are many things which are not exactly pleasant; and you can magnify them into difficulties. On the other hand, if you will approach them optimistically, in a cheery spirit of determination to make the best of everything, you will always find that there is a great deal that might have been worse. If you will only take the bright side, the bright side will be the prominent side for you; so I say it is very much what you make it. Yet, for all that, there is a vast amount of sorrow. The Lord Buddha Himself, the Wisest of Men, said as His First Great Truth, that: "Life is sorrow"; meaning physical life down here, life on

the lower plane. There is a great deal of suffering; there are thousands and thousands of people whose life is of necessity a heavy and weary one. No, clearly you should follow the Lords of Compassion; you would not wish to make their burdens heavier, to make it in any way worse, but rather to share those burdens and to make people feel it to be a better and nobler and more beautiful world.

It is your thought that will affect the world around you; you can make it either a good world or a sorrowful world for quite a number of people. Many of you have been living a life of meditation for a number of years. Now it would indeed be futile to think that there can be a cause which produces no effect. You cannot imagine that, with all this practice, you have not learned to think a little more definitely than your neighbours who have made no such attempt. Your thoughts are more powerful; it is obvious that it must be so; and that involves a great responsibility. Therefore if you should think an evil thought of anyone, I am bound to say that in great number of ways it is very much worse than if an ordinary person did it—first, because you know better; you are, as they say in the Church, "sinning against light". And secondly, your thought is doing much more because it is so much stronger. So that it is a very much more serious matter if one of you, who are students, should allow himself to be guilty of these evil thoughts. Make the world happier, make

it brighter,—you have no idea of how much of that you can do simply by putting away from yourself all sorrowful thoughts and filling yourself with love that will radiate all round you. You have no idea of the difference you can make. Then He says:

> If there is in that man the evil which you think, you are strengthening it and feeding it; and so you are making your brother worse instead of better. But generally the evil is not there, and you have only fancied it; and then your wicked thought tempts your brother to do wrong, for if he is not yet perfect you may make him that which you have thought him.

There again is the word "wicked". You see how strongly He speaks of it. You tempt your brother to do wrong; you make yourself in point of fact like the legendary Christian devil. There is no personal devil whose business it is to tempt, but men and women often do the work of the devil by sending out thoughts which tempt people, which react upon them; and that is a sad thing. They would not do it if they knew. We at least do know, and therefore we must try not to do wrong.

> You fill your own mind with evil thoughts instead of good; and so you hinder your own growth, and make yourself, for those who can see, an ugly and painful object instead of a beautiful and lovable one.

Now, you know how much trouble people take about their physical personal appearance; how anxious they are to look well, to appear always at their best; but there is a larger astral audience than any physical audience. If you let yourself appear

ugly in the astral world, a far greater number of people are scandalised by your appearance, or annoyed at it, than could possibly be the case on the physical plane. If you think anything of producing a good impression, you had better produce it there. It is a matter to be very seriously considered. You have a duty towards your fellows; you do not sufficiently recognise that. We all know that, in a general sort of way, we ought to put on the best appearance we can, to make the best of ourselves. If we go out into society, we try to be gentle and pleasant, and this not merely, I hope, because we feel it is a social duty that we owe people. The cult of beauty seems to have been forgotten to a very large extent in these days. In ancient days we know that it was every man's duty to make himself as perfect and as beautiful as possible, in every way, in attire, appearance, in speech and in action. He had to learn the proper, the right, the graceful way of doing everything. Not only sculpture and painting, but even pottery should be not only useful but also beautiful. If a man built a house, it was his duty to his neighbours and to the State to put up something that would be graceful and beautiful, not necessarily costly. I wish people would recognise that in these days, but they do not at all. They think only of building as cheaply as they can, and allow the result to be as hideous as it may. It is an actual duty, this cult of beauty. It is a duty not only to

ourselves but to others. A man builds a great ugly factory or a hideous house. Everybody who looks at it is the worse for having looked at it. Anybody who is sensitive must shrink back from it at once. That is bad karma for the man who put it there. You think that such things do not matter, but they do matter. One's surroundings are of very great importance. True, the strong soul can conquer its surroundings—I hope many of us do; but why should we not have things which would help us instead of things which hinder us? I tell you everybody who builds a beautiful place deserves well of his fellow citizens, because he has put up something the sight of which will give pleasure to every one who sees it; and that touch of pleasure you get also when you see some beautiful colour, because of the effect a beautiful colour produces in this gray civilisation of ours.

This same thing is true on other planes also. The man who makes for himself a radiant and beautiful astral body, full of love and devotion, deserves the gratitude of his fellows, because he is pouring out these vibrations. Not only do the inhabitants of the astral world see the beauty of it, but every one, even those who do not see it, feels it. These vibrations act upon them, and they are helped thereby. So here is a thing which surely ought to appeal to a great many that if you yield yourself to ugly, selfish, evil thoughts, you are spreading unpleasant

thoughts about you. Why should you? Then He says:

> Not content with having done all this harm to himself and to his victim, the gossip tries with all his might to make other men partners in his crime.

"Partners in his crime"—strong enough language! That is how it looks to a Master. You think it is a pity that people should talk foolishly, perhaps your thought of it stops there. The Master regards the thing as a crime. He knows very much better than we know.

> Eagerly he tells his wicked tale to them, hoping that they will believe it; and then they join with him in pouring evil thought upon the poor sufferer. And this goes on day after day, and is done not by one man but by thousands. Do you begin to see how base, how terrible a sin this is? You must avoid it altogether. Never speak ill of anyone; refuse to listen when anyone else speaks ill of another, but gently say, perhaps this is not true, and even if it is, it is kinder not to speak of it.

The misunderstanding of it all is so dreadful. You judge a man's actions without knowing their context, as it were. You know, in the reading of any book, how much depends on the context in which a particular word or sentence appears; I suppose that there is not a Scripture in the world, no matter how holy or beautiful, which you could not make ridiculous by taking some of its words away from their context, and putting them by themselves. You are always doing that with the thoughts of other people. You find a man to be irritable, he speaks sharply, perhaps

roughly. How do you know the reason of that? Possibly he has been sitting up all night with a sick child; perhaps someone else has jarred him or annoyed him in some way. You get the reflex action of that; the man is not annoyed with you. If he were a great Adept, probably he would not be, but we are not all great Adepts yet, you know. To judge a man's words without knowing their context does quite incalculable harm; so one has to be careful. Remember that justice is one of the manifestations of God, and that if we want to show forth the power of God in ourselves we must try to be just and kindly in our thoughts, because He is so. Well, the upshot of it all is, you see, that a man should mind his own business and leave others alone. It does not sound difficult; well, if everybody in the Society would do it, I think that we should be a far greater power than we are. We are doing better than the outer world of course; it would be indeed be a shame if we were not. But there is room to do a great deal better still, and we all mean to do it. The only difficulty in the way is that all these things, which we have actually to do, are such unpleasant little things. If you were asked to go out and suffer martyrdom for our Masters, you would do it. You might have your fears and your tremors inside, but you would do it; but to do these little, everyday things which do not seem to matter,— that is so much harder. It is the old story. Fifteen hundred years ago, S. Augustine said: "Many there

be who will die for Christ, but few there be who will live for Him." Plenty of people would die for Theosophy; but as for living for it, that is another story. However, we must try. Then He goes on to say:

> Then as to cruelty. This is of two kinds, intentional and unintentional. Intentional cruelty is purposely to give pain to another living being; and that is the greatest of all sins—the work of a devil rather than a man.

There again is very strong and decided language for you: "the work of a devil rather than a man." That is how it looks to a Master. His standpoint is worth considering. You know how often in daily life a man does or says something in order to cause pain to someone else. He means to say something nasty and he says it. Well, he comes under that condemnation; he is doing a thing which is worthy of a devil rather than a man.

> You would say that no man could do such a thing; but men have done it often, and are daily doing it now. The inquisitors did it; many religious people did it in the name of their religion.

Yes, He is quite right. Many religious people have done horrible things in the name of their religion. We think that we are getting more civilised now, yet even to-day religious feeling is very bitter in many quarters. The law does not permit such persecutions as used to take place. It is the fashion to say that, even if it did, our higher civilisation would not permit

us ever to resort to it. I am not so sure; I do not think that I should like to see absolute power given into the hands of any religious body. I hope that Theosophists would know how to use it, if it came their way; but as to other sects, I am not so sure. Read the oldest literature we know, the Vedas of India, and you will find it cropping out very strongly there. You will find the Aryans pouring down into the plains of India, and proceeding to put to the sword the people they find there. Nothing is too dreadful to be done to these people; they must be wiped off the face of the earth. Why? For one all-sufficient reason, because their rites are different. There you have religious feeling, you see, as it was many, many thousands of years ago; but it is the same thing which led to the persecution by the inquisitors and all the rest of it. You know how the Muhammadans have gone over their part of the world offering the Koran or the sword to people. Christians, you know, have not been very much better. Twenty millions fell in the Crusades; there have been frightful wars between Catholics and Protestants, and a vast amount of ill-feeling is now very strong in certain places. I do not think I should like to trust those people with much in the way of absolute power. He mentions, you notice, the inquisitors. Of course it is quite true that the power of the Church of these days was largely used for political purposes, but it seems almost certain that at

least some of those people must have believed themselves to be entirely in the right in what they are doing, must really have felt that they were doing good service. Now karma works on all planes; the karma of such actions as those of the inquisitors would be terrible beyond words, but if we can suppose that their intentions were good and pure, then on the mental plane they would have the karma of that good intention, even though they would have the karma of the most incredible stupidity. The physical plane karma would be very terrible. It is very difficult, very difficult, to put oneself back into such conditions as that.

Then He says: "Vivisectors do it." Perhaps that is a big question. It is important because people are sometimes very unreasonable about it. I will say something to you about it next week, if I can. I should have the very greatest horror myself of the whole thing; and yet I have known some of the men who do it, and I know those men to be good men, just as kindly in ordinary life as any of you; therefore I say that we must be careful to distinguish between the thing which is done and the man who does it. I have quite frankly nothing but abhorrence for the thing myself. I have heard all that is said in favour of it, and this amounts to practically nothing at all. I should not like to speak harshly of the vivisectors. "Shun the sin, but love the sinner." Vivisection is a horrible thing, but remember our Society is neutral.

Individual members may work for, or against, anything, any other movement, as much as they choose; but the Society, as such, holds an attitude of neutrality, recognising that there is good feeling on both sides, in any controversy, however the results may sometimes appear. So remember, for there is a great need to remember, that though our feelings may be roused to the highest pitch, we must not let ourselves be carried away, lest we should run into the sin of uncharitableness ourselves, even though we begin with what appears to be a noble cause. Even our noblest anger must be tempered with charity, otherwise we shall be no true disciples of the Great Ones.

XXIX

1915.

You may remember, Brothers, that last week we had just come (under the heading, Cruelty) to the question of vivisection. There is a great deal of very strong feeling in our Society on that question, and one cannot wonder at it. I may say at once that I myself have no sort of sympathy with it, that I consider the whole thing to be wrong—to be absolutely the wrong way to approach what the doctors desire to gain by it; but at the same time I think that it is well for us to bear in mind that there are very different kinds of this thing, showing very different degrees of criminality, though all of them have the same great and vital objection to them—namely, that the whole principle of the thing is wrong. In the books of the Anti-vivisection Society you will read all kinds of perfectly ghastly and obviously useless horrors, things that people have done merely out of morbid curiosity—as, for example, to see exactly to what degree of temperature an animal can be baked before certain functions disappear, and all sorts of horrible things like that. One must suppose that the men who do such things are not actually cruel inside.

It seems difficult to believe, but one must give them the benefit of the doubt. But at least there is no obvious use, indeed I think we may go further and say there is absolutely no use, in such abominations. All vivisectionists, of course, are not cruel to the same degree. I know, for example, a doctor who is one of the first surgeons in the world, and a member of our own Society, who, before he joined the Society, performed vivisection, but of an entirely different kind. I will give you an example of the less objectionable kind, so that you may understand what I mean. There are certain tubes in the human body which sometimes come to grief, become severed. They are so fine that, when one tries to join them again, the inevitable scar always blocks the tube. The tube is so fine that you cannot have it with a scar upon it—it blocks the passageway if they are joined end to end. It was for a time impossible to do anything with the problem, until it occurred to this doctor that, if one made a larger incision, it might be possible for the thing to heal and yet keep it open. He did this by making an incision in the tube near the end of one, and on the side of the other, and let them overlap like that and heal in that way. A very ingenious scheme, as you will see. In order to see whether this thing would work, he tried experiments upon a number of dogs, the experiment being simply to make a slight incision—to cut this tube and then to join it in this particular way. He has told

me himself that he tried this experiment on some half dozen stray dogs that were found in the street. They were thoroughly well fed and brought into perfect health before the operation; some anæsthetic was then administered and the dogs were nursed very carefully until they had recovered, and it was found that the operation had been successful. Here we have some half dozen stray dogs which were utilised for the purpose, and after being so utilised were turned out in very much better health than they had ever been before. The result was that this, which had before been thought impossible, became a recognised possibility, and that the operation, which is now a common one all over the world, is called by the name of the doctor who invented it. The principle is undoubtedly wrong, but we can see that there was practically no cruelty to the animals concerned, and they were much better off for the time being. They had some weeks of care and good feeding, instead of being left to stray in the streets, and were then turned out in very much better health. You see that both in its motive and in its method that is quite, quite different from the other. I do not believe either of the things to be right as a matter of principle, but still I do recognise that there is a very sharp distinction to be drawn, and that it would be entirely inappropriate to attack the doctor, who did what I have just described, in the sort of way in which the anti-vivisectionists are constantly attacking the others.

Thus although, as a matter of principle, I do not see that the thing is to be condoned myself, yet I would advise you to be very careful that you do not let your proper and natural feelings of sympathy and pity for the animals carry you away into anything like hatred for the people, because after all it is always wrong to hate people, even people who do such things as this. If hatred were permissible, that would be different; but we must not hate. If we do, we lower ourselves to something of their own level. We may quite reasonably object strongly to the principle of the whole thing; only remember that, if any of you do feel moved to work in that way, you must do so as private individuals, and you must not bring into the matter the name of the Theosophical Society, because we hold perfect neutrality with regard to all matters outside our own study. We do not, as a society, go into politics: we do not commit the Society, as such, to any movement whatever. Even the Order of the Star in the East, which is an offshoot of the Theosophical Society, cannot be taken as compulsory for any Theosophist. The Society exacts no belief from its members, but only the one central idea that they shall be willing to work for Universal Brotherhood. As a matter of fact, nearly all those who join the Society do hold the general mass of beliefs which we call Theosophy, but it is very important that you should remember that members are not in any way bound to do so, and

that you must not say or write anything that implicates the Society in your own beliefs. There may be great difference of opinion in the Society about any of these outside matters, and even about the interior ones. We have many doctors in our ranks many of whom must have performed vivisection of sorts, and may very likely have different ideas with regard to it. We must not, therefore, thrust our opinions upon them, nor give the impression that our opinions, as announced, are those held by the Society. The Society holds no opinions, but its individual members are perfectly free to hold whatever opinions they choose. We have to be careful that we do not involve the corporate body. I, myself, object to the whole thing, and consider it useless as well as horribly cruel. It is useless, because the vivisector tries to judge what will happen to the man from what happens to the animal—a very unsafe thing to do, you know. It is evident that the constitution of the animal will differ very much from that of the man. Take one example. You will find the goat, among other miscellaneous food, will eat freely of henbane. If you eat freely of henbane you will pass on to the astral plane. It is not safe to conclude that a thing that will work with an animal will work in the same way with human beings. An animal under vivisection is in frightful pain and that must change the fluids of the body. I should think it very unsafe to risk conclusions drawn from the reactions of animals in

that condition and to apply them to human beings. The proper substitute for all this exceedingly unpleasant matter is, of course, clairvoyance. It is far better for the doctor, if he can so see into the interior economy of the living man, while the body is whole, than it is to deduce certain things about it by cutting into the living body of an animal, which differs from that of the man. If they must vivisect, they would do better to vivisect a human being, first obtaining his consent,—if such a thing were likely to be given (I should think it very improbable). But to take the animal without its consent, and treat it like that, cannot be the right thing to do. They say that through this they have made discoveries that have saved many human lives. I have heard our President say that no lives ought to be saved by such methods as that, and that the karma of so saving them is not good but bad. It all comes from the æsthetical idea that you must at all costs save the human life. It has a good side: the idea of self-preservation is implanted in every man as in every animal, in order that in all ordinary circumstances the body which has been taken by the ego at considerable cost and trouble, may be made to last as long as possible. We who are Theosophists know that death is by no means the worst thing that may happen to man. Fortunately there are many thousands of men who would face death rather than dishonour, and surely it is a dishonour that anyone should be

saved at the cost of such suffering as that. Our President said that she would rather die than be saved by anything whatever that had been obtained in so diabolical a manner. That is a position that anyone may quite reasonably and justifiably take, if he wishes to take it.

It is far better for the doctor to learn how to become clairvoyant; and the pitiable thing about it is, that the amount of trouble and the amount of study and exertion which are put into all this research would be quite enough to bring the average man to clairvoyance. In Atlantis no man was allowed to be a doctor unless he was clairvoyant, because it was supposed that otherwise he could not see what was the matter. He could only deduce from the exterior appearance, which is quite likely to be misleading. Furthermore there is a certain amount of danger in the trend that our civilisation is taking just now. You know that in the Middle Ages Europe was under the domination of the Church. A man could not possess his own opinions in piece and quietness, but was liable to be hauled up before casual tribunals and examined about his opinions. The Church made every effort to force its particular view of things upon other people—hence the Inquisition—hence all sorts of horrors. It was a terrible business, that slavery to the Church. There is no slavery to the Church now, but we are within measurable distance of slavery to the doctors, because already the arm of the law is

forcing their ideas upon us, just as the Church used to get the Civil Law to enforce its doctrines. It was the Civil Law, you know, which burned all those people. The Church, finding it could not make them say that they believed certain things, would decide that this was a case where the Civil Law should be called in, and handed them over with the hypocritical prayer that there should be no shedding of blood, which prevented the Civil Law from cutting off the poor fellow's head decently, and made it burn him instead.

The doctors of the present day are enforcing upon us some of their ideas by law. They are enforcing vaccination. In certain cases they enforce other kinds of inoculation. Now there is no doubt that, by giving you a milder form of the disease, they make you much less liable to take the more serious form called smallpox. That is an unquestionable fact—I think it has been proved to be so. But many of you know that, by making you immune for a time (it is only for a time, mind) against that particular disease, they run a distinct risk of giving you others. It is a question whether, on the whole, the remedy may not be worse than the disease, in the actual amount of suffering entailed. That is an arguable point. We can take no sides, but it is at least an arguable matter. The danger of it all is this—that the doctors, in gaining power, enforce certain ideas, but, when they find them unsatisfactory very frequently change

these ideas. All the world accepted the Pasteur theory. I am told now that there is beginning to be a very considerable doubt whether it really does all it is supposed to do ; whether in some cases it does not produce the very symptoms it is supposed to cure. I have not gone into the details of the thing, I have had no opportunity to do so, but I have seen statements made to that effect, that there is beginning to be a very great doubt about it, that doctors do not recommend it so freely as they used to, and that many people speak quite openly against it. I know that there was a great scare in India, arising from the theory that rats brought plague. They killed millions of rats on that hypothesis. Now they have discovered that the rats have nothing to do with it. In the meantime the rats are dead. It is, perhaps, not a very serious matter, but don't you see that it might have been men ? One has to be a little careful. They are so sure, at the moment, of each new idea, that before the idea has had time to be properly tested, it may have been forced upon a great number of innocent people to their great loss and suffering. There is a certain danger in this kind of domination. There is a danger lest we become slaves to the scientific people in turn, as our forefathers were slaves to the Church. In many ways the scientific domination has done good. It has enforced hygiene in various ways, and this has unquestionably done good. But it enforces sometimes one thing and

sometimes another. There is considerable doubt as to whether some of the ideas which are enforced are the best. There is a danger in giving any one class the power to enslave and dominate the rest of the community. It is all done in the interests of science and in the interests of the people; but so, according to the thought of those days, was the action of the Inquisition. It was all in the interest of the unfortunate heretic that he was burned for a short time to prevent his being burned for all eternity. These interests of the community are dangerous when they get the law to back them up. We must observe the neutrality of our own Society. We can have our own private opinions, but we must not credit them to the Society.

The rest of the sentence goes on to another subject:

> Vivisectors do it; many schoolmasters do it habitually. All these people try to excuse their brutality by saying that it is the custom; but a crime does not cease to be a crime because many commit it.

The beating of children is a world-wide custom, but that is no excuse for it. You see that He says that all these people try to excuse their brutality by saying it is the custom; but a crime does not cease to be a crime because many commit it. That is said by a Master, who, as such, knows particularly well what He is talking about. It is not after all a world-wide custom; I am happy to say that there are a few

countries which in that respect have attained civilisation. I believe that Japan is one of them. I know from my own experience that Italy is another. I lived for some considerable time in one of the Italian cities, in a house which overlooked the grounds of a great school, and I watched with very great interest the relations between the masters and the boys. The Italian nature is a little different from ours; it is much more excitable; but I am bound to say that I was very well pleased with the thing on the whole. Because of their nature the masters did not keep discipline in the same way as we do. The boys would be all drawn up in line and at any moment one of them would suddenly leave the ranks and rush up to the master. He would seize upon his arm and say something to him in quite an impassioned way. The master would smile and pat his head, evidently granting his request or saying something about it. They were all on the most perfectly friendly terms. They do not enforce our own half military ideas. You see the boys were much more excitable and, as a general rule, more noisy than our boys would be. There was distinctly less semi-military order, but they were all exceptionally friendly. I noticed that, whenever these boys met their master in the street, they immediately sprang upon him and pulled him about and were the very greatest of friends out of school hours too. That is a very good sign, because the man whom children love is always a good man at heart;

the instinct is infallible. So there are countries where our horrors are not permitted. In Italy anything like that could not happen because their custom is different. To lay a hand upon a person is the one unforgivable sin, which means knives and duels and things of that sort. So children are perfectly safe, which is much more than we can say in our civilisation.

People do not realise these things. They say they are the custom, but they are very bad customs. The idea of beating a child and the idea of punishing a criminal by law—these things have in them the elements of revenge. They seem to say: "You do such and such a thing, and I will make it very uncomfortable for you." The idea has an element of revenge. I know that they say punishment by law is to prevent other people from doing the same. Well, it doesn't, you know. It does not act in that way. If you know anything of English history you will be aware that a hundred years ago the punishments of the English law were very severe, more severe than they are now. For example, a person could be hanged for stealing anything above the value of one shilling and six pence. That was the law in England and it was constantly carried into effect. I remember having seen at the entrance of Newgate prison and in other places, a notice that such and such a one was hanged for stealing a pair of gloves, value two or three shillings. That was the

kind of severe punishment that was meted out; and, with the population of England half what it is now, the proportion of crime was much greater than it is now. The proportion of crime seems to have nothing to do with the punishments meted out; it is a question of general education and civilisation.

This question of punishment by the law, or by the school, signally fails to deter other people and, as regards the man himself, it is nothing but a revenge, because it has no relation to the crime committed. Let us suppose a man steals something. You shut him up in prison for a certain time. But what is the relation between the two things? He might reasonably be made to do some work which should return the value of the article stolen to the person from whom it was taken. The punishment should fit the crime in some way. There should be some sort of connection and some use in the thing. But to shut a man up because he has stolen something is a kind of nightmare. There is no connection between the two things. No one uses common-sense. A child does not learn a certain lesson and they beat him. What is the connection between the two things? It would be quite reasonable to say: "You have not learnt the lesson; you will be behind the other boys in your class, therefore you must stay and learn it when you would otherwise playing." There would be at least reason in that. There is no sense in the other kind of thing, and it is radically wrong. The

idea of giving intentional pain is always wrong. We must keep our minds clear about these things, and we in the Theosophical Society should not be led away by this bugbear of custom. All sorts of things are the custom which are eminently undesirable and foolish things. You have only to look back at the customs of earlier ages. It is the custom in China for ladies to bandage their feet so that they cannot walk. That is the custom, but it is not a sensible one. There are other customs here. I do not want to launch upon troubled questions, but there are fashions which are anything but sensible fashions, yet people follow them quite blindly. Some of them are actually dangerous; only people never think of these things. I have seen —of course there are extremes in these things—I have seen ladies wearing boots with heels so high and skirts so tight, that it would be impossible for them to run in them. In an emergency they could not run. Now do you not see that either of these things might mean loss of life? You might find yourself in a position where you must run in order to save yourself. I know very little about such matters, but I infer that a sensible woman takes care to avoid the extremes of fashion that would be dangerous, but that, at the same time, she does not make herself conspicuous. That is the sensible view to take. You must not get the idea that because a thing is the custom, even because it has been the custom for

hundreds of years, it must necessarily be a good thing or a necessary thing; because very often it is not.

Take the idea of punishment. First of all, from beginning to end, the whole thing is unnecessary. The laws of Nature will see to it. If anyone does wrong, the laws of karma will attend to that, and the laws cannot make a mistake; whereas human beings very often commit a frightful legal injustice; it has been done again and again. In such cases, penalties have been imposed upon people who happen to be innocent. The great law of Nature never makes that mistake. What the man does recoils upon himself and not upon anybody else. Of course Society must defend itself. It must defend itself against a man who habitually steals; it must defend itself against a man who would commit murder; and therefore certain rights Society must have. It has always the right to banish. Your community might reasonably say to some habitual criminal, as they used to say to such people in Peru; "We are a civilised race. With great trouble we have arranged our State upon a certain scheme, and it is intended for people who will keep its laws. If you do not intend to keep the laws, go out and live with some one else." It was the only punishment, and to be cast out to live among the barbarian tribes was the greatest disgrace as well as being exceedingly uncomfortable. Society has that much right. It has the right to restrain a

dangerous person. When you get a Malay running amuck you must restrain him, even though it should be at the cost of taking his life. That is the reasonable thing; you have the right to banish or restrain, but under any ordinary circumstances you have not the right to kill, and you have never the right to torture. That is absolutely certain and there is no way of getting over it. The idea of capital punishment is based upon an entirely wrong theory. Of course, as I say, a madman running amuck must be restrained. He is just like a mad dog and must be killed, because otherwise you would sacrifice the lives of human beings whom he would destroy. You say the criminal has done wrong and so deserves to suffer. Karma will look after that. Remember that the criminal has done more harm to himself than he has to anybody else. That is the greatest wrong of all which he does to himself, and you may be very sure that the law will attend to that.

If a person is weak-minded we try to cure him; but cases of hopeless insanity are taken care of by the State. The criminal tendency is a disease. In some cases it can be cured. They take boys and put them in reformatories. They give them a certain kind of treatment which brings them round to be decent citizens. I presume there are cases which cannot be treated successfully, and such cases should be treated in the way in which the State treats the hopelessly insane. Certainly you have the right to restrain these

people who are a danger to the community; but, as I say, you have no right to torture them. The ideas are real and quite clear. I think our results should be obtained, in the case of both the criminal and the child, by educating and not by frightening them. The system of terrifying children produces exceedingly harmful results. It introduces into their lives fear, pain and deceit and so on—all of them exceedingly evil things. It is just a question of a little management. The whole system of frightening people by laws, and of frightening children by punishments, is the same thing as the old Church idea of hell. They thought to make people good by frightening them. It is odd how that idea still persists. One of our principal living novelists wrote to me some time ago and said that, at the seaside, he once met a young man, found him suitable soil, and put into him some Theosophical ideas. He explained to him that there was no such thing as hell, that it was all nonsense; and he explained a little of the real thing to him. Later on this young fellow's mother paid the novelist a visit. She was exceedingly angry. She said: "Why, that is the only way I have been able to keep the boy in order—by the fear of hell, by threatening him with it day and all day long. Now that you have persuaded him that there is no hell, what am I going to do?" That is the result of using wrong tactics, you see. Perhaps if she had known a little better, and had explained things to him from the

first, there would have been no need to adopt this very unpleasant form of terrorism. It is not a pleasant sort of bugbear to put before people. We might do better than this, but that idea is still about. If you take your revenge upon a criminal you are acting brutally, just as the criminal is acting brutally. Your idea should be to educate him, to show him that his method is all wrong. That is more trouble. To kill him off saves you a certain amount of trouble. It does not save him, as an ego, any trouble at all. In all these cases you have to think of the real man—the soul—and not the present body. It is sometimes less trouble for you to dispose of a thing off-hand. It would be less trouble for a judge or a magistrate to dispose of a case without looking into it, but in that case he would do frightful injustice. Similarly, to hang a criminal is a quick way out of our difficulty. He is an unfortunate son of the country, one of whom the country is by no means proud. But remember, if you have a sick child you do not think what a trouble it is to you. You think: "What can I do for it? It needs more care than those that are strong." Well, the criminal is the sick child of the State, and you should deal with him from that point of view. You should deal with him from the point view of the soul within. Another thing is that we interfere far too much with other people. Remember, I have said that Society must defend itself. We cannot allow anyone to steal or kill, or

to commit assault without restraining him, but we do interfere in numbers of ways, where we might reasonably allow a little more liberty. That comes in a great deal in education. In school life quantities of rules are made where there is no need for rules—where freedom might reasonably be allowed—about all sorts of unnecessary details, and the consequence of that is interference with individual liberty. That is always a very dangerous thing to embark upon. That is one of the great differences between the English scheme of government and that of some of other nations—that England on the whole tries to leave its people as free as it can. There may be some of you here who, before you came out to Australia, lived in countries outside of the British Empire. Those of you who have done so can probably remember to how many restrictions you were subjected. They were paternal and very kindly meant, but they were restrictions. You were forbidden to do this and to do that. I remember an official of a foreign State saying to me once: "Well, sir, in a really well-managed country everything would be forbidden." In some countries they try to govern the people by saying: "You must not do this, you must not do that," by trying to shut them off at every point. There are, of course, different ways of putting all these things. I have been much struck by this in the different countries in which I have been. In one country you will get a stern prohibition; in another

country you will get a request. Some obviously adopt the military plan, but others appeal to the good in the man. I remember, for example, reading one sign forbidding certain unpleasant practices. It ran: "Gentlemen will not, and others must not" do so and so. That was in America, which is one of the newer countries. I thought it was rather well put. There are other methods beside compulsion, and compulsion is never a good thing except in extreme cases. There are cases where you must assert it in the interest of your community, but it is always better to carry their wills with you than to drive them along against their will.

That, remember, is only very slightly understood with regard to education. The idea is always: "Do not do this, do not do that. This must not be done; this is forbidden;" and so on, and they carry that even into their ordinary teachings. They do not engage the interest of the child in what they are doing, but just impose it upon him. "This is a lesson and it must be learnt." If they could only make it interesting the whole thing would go with much less friction. That comes out in the Montessori system. We find it, too, to some extent in the Froebel method. People are learning all these things. The custom of the past made things as uninteresting and as difficult as possible. I remember how I learned the Latin Grammar as a boy. I had to learn a number of rules in the Latin language. That method is not

adopted now, because men are wiser. This idea of imposing your ideas upon others is carried much too far. There is only one way—I have been at it all my life and I know—there is only one way in which you can really and usefully teach a child anything, and that is by making him love you, to begin with. You exercise a certain amount of moral suasion afterwards, because you look injured, pained, if he does wrong. That is quite legitimate, because you really do feel pained; and that is better than trying to force the child to do what you want him to do. If you begin by ruling by love, you call out the love in the pupil, and you can get something done. If you start with force and brutality, you call out nothing but hostility, and then you do not get anything done. You know, in ordinary life, if one business man wants to get something out of another business man, he does not go to work by antagonising him. He speaks pleasantly to him and tries to convince him that whatever it is, which he wants done, will be to their mutual advantage. It would not occur to him to start out by trying to drive the other man; it would only antagonise him and make anything like friendly relations between them impossible.

Boys and girls are human beings too, and you can get more out of them if you have them on your side than if you set them against you to start with. These are matters of experiment to those who try to teach. There are many incompetent teachers, because no

teacher, however skilful, however learned, is worthy of that name unless he can interest the children and get them to love him. It is an absolute prerequisite. That is the way in which our Masters teach us ; never by force, never by issuing commands, but by showing us the right way and by encouraging us to try to imitate Them.

We may imitate Them with advantage in that also.

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XXX

August 17, 1915.

WE were speaking on this question of cruelty in regard to the inquisitor and in regard to the schoolmaster; I had to say something about that last Sunday evening, so that I think we might pass away from that part of the subject now, except that there is one point that I should like to note with regard to it. The Master speaks of such cruelties as being crimes. Now that is not the least the point of view of the world in general. It is important for you, who are studying these matters and hoping to reach the feet of the Master, that you should try to understand His attitude. With regard to all kinds of subjects you will find that the attitude of the Master differs very much from that of the ordinary man of the world. We must try to see why that is so, when we find difficulties, and must endeavour to bring ourselves into harmony with His point of view.

I think that question of attitude is really one of the most important things in connection with Theosophical study. We often find that Lodges are devoting themselves to the study of books from the point of view of acquiring a great deal of information about

Theosophy. Now, of course, that is very good, but at the same time it must not be forgotten, as it is very often is, that Theosophy is first of all and most of all a life to be lived as well as a system to be learned, and that it is only those who are trying to live the life which it prescribes, who really obtain the fullest benefit from the philosophy of the system. The whole thing is so interrelated, its different parts are so closely interlinked, that, as we have often said, you do not know how strong is the evidence for any one part of Theosophy until you know all the rest, which gives you another side of the same idea. The life is linked very closely with the study and is really a part of it; and I do think that to get into the Theosophical attitude towards the outer world—towards all that happens in it—is one of the most important things that we can do.

The attitude induced by Theosophy is precisely the attitude of the Master, so that, wherever we get any direct hints from Him, as you get so many in this book, it is very important to follow them. Try to understand why He takes that particular view, and then, as far as you reasonably can, bring your view into harmony with His. Yet we must not force the thing. It would not be wise for any of us to adopt a point of view merely because it was the Master's, without understanding how He arrived at it. In one sense, we should be quite safe in doing so, since it is certain that He knows much more about

the matter than we do and that, where ours differs from His, ours is in the wrong. Still, He Himself would not wish that we should adopt an attitude blindly, merely because it was His, but that we should try to understand why He took that point of view, and so convince our intellect as well as having our feelings influenced by His thought.

You know that the pupil of the Master has the power of laying His thought beside that of the Master, so that, if he finds wherein it differs in any way from the Master's, he promptly corrects it. But of course, as a pupil, he is in a very peculiar position in relation to his Master. The Master's consciousness definitely includes his, and if the pupil finds himself in any way differing from that, it is because he has not fully assimilated it. You are not yet, most of you, quite in that position, and you ought to bring your intellect along with you in any such change of opinion; otherwise it is not a change of opinion, but only of feelings. If you look at the thing carefully, you will see in a case like this, for example, that the Master takes some such line as the following: The people who punish children, or criminals, are usually thinking of revenging themselves for what has been done, or of preventing some one else from doing the same thing. Now that would not be the prominent idea in the mind of the Master in regard to such a thing. His idea would begin with the attitude which He would take towards the other person,—the child, or

the criminal, or whoever it may be, it does not matter. He would adopt the attitude of love to begin with, and in all dealings with that other person he would be considering that person's good; there would be no thought in his mind of revenge, nor of preventing other people, who have nothing to do with that particular case, from doing the same thing. He would be thinking of the effect on that person and He would approach it with the knowledge that the same Divine Life was in that person as in Himself, and He would endeavour to work through that Divine Life. He would say that any such methods as you describe are utterly inadmissible because, first of all, they fundamentally ignore the whole law of love, the whole principle of the thing. They bring into play other considerations which have nothing to do with the matter. So, for that reason, His attitude would be a very determined one on such points. He says these things are crimes, and certainly the results they produce are very serious. The karma of such things is terrible and you will find the Lipika, the Lords of Karma Themselves, do not look at things from your point of view very often. We are wont to consider, for example, that death is one of the most terrible things that could happen to anybody. That is why we impose death as the heaviest punishment for an infraction of our laws. The Lords of Karma, on the other hand, do not look upon death in that sort of way at all. They not infrequently give it as a reward—the death, that is to say, which

raises the man at once into higher and happier conditions. They do not regard it, in the least, as a thing which has in it any of the qualities of a punishment. Now that, in itself, alters one's view of a great many other things besides the mere fact of death. So, in the same way, the man who takes up the profession of a schoolmaster does that in order to get his living, just as he might take up any other profession. The Lords of Karma do not regard the profession of teaching from that point of view at all. They would put a man into such a place with the idea of giving him a magnificent opportunity. He may not take it; but that is what it is, from Their point of view, a great opportunity for him, if he should take it up and carry it through, carefully, tactfully, lovingly, and one which would probably lead him on to another life in which he would be a religious teacher. From that the way is open to become a great saint, a great benefactor of mankind. It lies straight in the road to some of the highest prizes, from the point of view of the Karmic Deities; so that misuse of such an opportunity would be a terrible fall for a man. Cruelty in such cases brings very horrible results. Your President has told you that cruelty very often brings insanity as its result. On certain occasions we have found it to bring a sort of repayment in kind—that is to say, that a man who had been cruel, was himself put in a position, in another life, in which he suffered great cruelty. In very

many cases it has also resulted,—oddly enough, from our point of view—in a remarkable and cataclysmic descent in the social scale. A person who had been cruel in a reasonably good position finds himself thrown down amongst the dregs of the populace because of that cruelty. So it is evident that the Lords of Karma, demonstrating the great Laws of the Universe, take the same kind of view of these things that the Master takes. It is well for us to understand that.

An opportunity somewhat similar is given to the manager of a factory, or the head of a large business of any kind. A man thinks of such a place as one to be desired, because it gives him an opportunity of getting a good salary or of making a good deal of money, and so obtaining a certain amount of power. Now the Karmic Deities would regard that, again, as a sort of opportunity to help all those who came under his control. Of course that would mean, if the employer understood it, a very different attitude on his part. You know, an employer often regards his men with a scarcely veiled hostility; he thinks that they want to get as much out of him as they can and to take advantage of him in various ways. On their part, the men usually think that he wishes to grind them down, so as to get all he can out of them, paying them as little as possible. Of course, it is true, unfortunately, that in some cases both parties are right in thinking as they do. There are

employers who take that attitude; there are very many workmen who take that line towards their employers; but the man who understands will not look at it in the least in that way. Karma regards such a position as an enormous opportunity. It does not take into consideration whether the man makes the thing pay, or whether he does not; that is not the point. The point is, that it gives the man an opportunity of being a helpful influence in the life of a number of people. That is the only part of the relationship, the only aspect of it, which concerns the Karmic Deities. In dealing with children the same thing has to be considered as with men. Every child, that is to say, is an ego, and the opportunity is given to the teacher to help in guiding the character of that ego in the right direction. Of course the circumstances will differ in every case. The schoolmaster naturally has a vast opportunity because the children are sent to him to learn, and he can make of them very much what he will, with care. Here again, (and this is just as true of the employer of labour as of the schoolmaster), he will influence them quite as much by what he is, and by the way in which he acts, as by anything directly said to them. He who is what he ought to be radiates round him a strong and powerful influence by his life. In the case of the schoolmaster that is one of the most important things; but it is so with the employer also.

The Master speaks, in all these cases, of an attitude of love. I have said before, I think, that we do not need to exaggerate that in any way; we do not want to suggest that you are to feel the same kind of love as you feel to father and mother, wife or child, towards everybody. That is impossible, of course, but you must be in a condition of active goodwill towards all the people round you, not of mere passive tolerance. Often, I know, members think they have gone a very long way if they no longer dislike people, if they can manage not to feel active dislike. That is certainly an improvement, but it is far from the Master's attitude. The Master's is an attitude of active goodwill, a definite desire to help, ever looking for an opportunity of doing something. That is the sort of attitude the pupil of the Master ought to try to take also. People often do not understand this and introduce all kinds of unpleasant ideas. Of course, in the case of the schoolmaster, there is the complication that, if he does not understand his position, he may actually delay the development of these egos. They are put into his hands in order that he may teach them to control their vehicles and help to make things easier for them. If, instead of arousing feelings of love, he arouses those of fear, or, as so often happens, of deceit, then he is very distinctly hampering the progress of those egos, and so not only losing the fine opportunity of helping, but actively doing harm. It is a position of great

responsibility, there is no question at all about that.

You get an example of the same kind of thing in the Parable of the Talents. You remember how it was said there, to the man who had used his talents as they were meant to be used: "Thou hast been faithful over few things, I will make thee ruler over many things." So the man who does a bit of business of this sort will get a much wider opportunity. The man who has the opportunity, say, of the school-master in one life, might, in his next, get the opportunity of being a spiritual teacher to a vast number of people,—that is to say, of the same thing on a very much greater scale; in this way he would be made ruler over many things. It was said to him, remember: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," and the people who read that parable mostly forget what that means. They think it means to enter into heaven—into a condition of pleasure and delight. That is not the joy of the Lord. The joy of the Lord is sacrifice; for it was in sacrifice that He poured Himself down into the Universe and occupied it. It is that which is joy, it is that which is the "play of Bacchus" in the Greek Mysteries; the play (*Lila*) of Shri Krishna in the Hindu scheme. The very making of the Universe is joy, is play to Him. So you who enter into the joy of the Lord must enter into the self-sacrifice of the Lord. That is the only way in which you can share His Bliss.

Of course people all know these things really, only somehow they do not put them into practice. It is the old story; it was so in the time of Christ, judging at least by what He said. He spoke strongly about the Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, who paid tithes in mint and cummin and anise, that is to say they were very particular about those outer religious duties because they were ordered to pay a tithe on all that they had, they took even these little things which correspond to pepper and salt and gave a tiny fragment of a pinch, so that they might be on the right side, and yet entirely forgot justice and mercy and faith. There are Scribes and Pharisees still, you know. People are very punctilious about outer duties, but forget that the really important matters are these inner things.

I do not want to say anything against the popular religion of the time; but we have suffered very much from this dreadful Sunday theory of setting apart a particular day on which to be religious. It has very distinctly led people to be irreligious. It must have been intended to make sure that one day at least should be taken apart from ordinary business and wholly devoted to religion. The practical working of that is that religion has come to be relegated from all the rest of the life of the week. I have noticed that the people who do not keep Sunday, Hindus, Buddhists, Muhammadans have religion permeating the whole of their lives in a way which you do not see at

all in Christian countries, except amongst monks and nuns and people of that sort. All the people in those religions are constantly thinking of their religion and observing it. I do not say they are all good people, any more than all Christians are—there are good and bad in all races and all religions—but I do say that religion means very much more to these people than it does to the average Christian. The attitude of the latter has very largely come from this idea that religion belongs to one day a week. They think that, if they attend service one day a week, it discharges all obligations; so, in that way, the very idea of one day set apart has become very hurtful.

Let us now pass on to what the Master next says:

> The fate of the cruel must fall also upon all who go out intentionally to kill God's creatures and call it 'sport'.

That is absolutely true. There is His attitude once more—that sport is a cruel thing—a sharp condemnation of the people who engage in it. You know how far removed that is from the attitude of the average man of the world. Usually he does not think at all, but when he does think, his thought is that all these creatures were created for his use, and so he uses his skill and his power over them by killing them. It is the natural point of view, a sort of commonplace. I know in England, in country districts, it is so. As was said once in *Punch*: "It is a fine day; let us go out and kill something." Of course you can see it is an absolutely wicked point of

view, but the average man does not see it as such in the very least. I suppose it is difficult for us to believe that all these people, who do all these cruel things under the name of sport, can be good or kindly people at all; but they are. I myself lived chiefly among people of that type in England. As a clergyman in a country parish in England, I was in close relation with a set of people who shot and hunted and fished, and did all these things as their regular daily occupation. It was the principal thing they did, the principal thing they talked about; yet I assure you, however hard you may find it to believe, that these people were perfectly gentle and kindly towards their fellow-men, good fathers, good husbands, lenient judges, kind friends, and so on—perfectly good and kind-hearted people; only they did not see that particular thing. By the strangest contradiction and anomaly, I know that one of those very men, who would kill deer, shoot as many pheasants as he could in a reckless way, would yet sit up all night with a dog that was sick, showing that the man had a kind heart, and that even towards the animals he felt a certain brotherhood, a certain interest. Yet that very man would kill other creatures—kill them without the slightest compunction. It is very strange how that blindness can be; yet it exists. When you have once seen that that is a horrible thing and that, in doing it, you are taking part in the slaughter of God's creatures, you wonder how you never saw it before;

and there are thousands of people who do not see it —it simply has never occurred to them. The glamour of custom has fallen over them, and they have never thought of the frightful harm that the custom has done.

The same thing is true with regard to certain articles of dress. There are certain kinds of feathers, certain kinds of decorations, that can only be procured at terrible cost in animal life—not only by the death of the creatures concerned, but generally of other young creatures depending on the mother for life. People who wear these things are certainly criminally careless. They are not desperately or intentionally cruel—not in the least; they are simply doing what other people do. They cannot afford to consider these questions, lest Mrs. So-and-So should be better dressed than they; and other considerations of the sort come in. They do not see the thing from the attitude of the Master in the least. I take it that we, who are trying to follow Him, should definitely try to see things from His point of view. That, at any rate, is our clear duty, whether we do it or not.

Then He says:

> Such things as those you would not do, I know;

(He is speaking here to pupils, but He gives us credit for not doing such things as these.)

> and for the sake of the love of God, when opportunity offers, you will speak clearly against them.

You would think that people could not avoid seeing these things. It is not lack of intellect, it is only that matter of custom. Many of the people who do all these things are in every way as intelligent as we (we may even be less intelligent than these people) but they have not thought. We may be less intelligent than they in certain other ways, but on that particular subject we have thought, and that is the first great step in advance. First think about a thing and try to see what you are doing. So He says: "Speak clearly against them, when opportunity offers." Of course we do not want to thrust our ideas upon other people, so that such speech needs to be done carefully, although clearly. I do not myself speak on such matters usually, unless my opinion is asked, unless the thing comes prominently before me in some way, because it seems to me that one needs to do these things with caution. I do not think it is well to go on thrusting one's ideas upon others without some sort of preparation for it. I do not think it does any good. I would do it most cheerfully if it were likely to call attention of people or to bring about any result, but as a rule it does not. You know the aggressive people who thrust their ideas upon you always arouse in you a certain resentment. You are not very likely to pay attention to a thing thrust upon you in that way. A person comes up to you in the street and wants to know whether you have found Jesus, or whether your soul is saved—it

happens pretty often. You do not feel attracted to the person who accosts you in that way. It does not recommend their system to you, it rather sets you against it. You think: "Oh dear me, if the people are so tactless as this, surely their religion cannot be such a good one." It does not prejudice you in their favour. Do you not see just the same thing would happen if you thrust your ideas in that same aggressive way upon other people? It would probably arouse them to defend their own different line. But if you are asked about these things, or if an opportunity comes to lend a book, or a pamphlet, there is another matter. You can then do the thing gently and quietly. So if you find yourself among a number of sportsmen, I should not start out by saying: "This is a very wicked thing," although it is; but if I were asked, I should say quietly: "I hold that all life is sacred, that these animals are really younger brothers of ours, and you have no more right to go out and kill them for your pleasure than you would have to kill a man for your pleasure."

People would be surprised, perhaps would sneer covertly at the thing, but they would not be set against you as they would be if you attacked them. In the same way with vegetarianism. One very soon feels great disgust and dislike to be at the same table with people who are eating meat; yet it constantly happens that you have to be at the same table—when travelling by ship and so on—and it is not well to show

your disgust; that is not the way to convert other people. But they may, perhaps, ask your views, and you can express your views; but always temperately; forcefully yet quietly. It is no use antagonising other men; to begin with, you are not likely to convert them. If you state things quietly and temperately, it is quite probable, if the man begins to think about it, that he will come over to your point of view.

So with all other things; there may be a case when you can beneficially startle a man by telling him that some everyday action of his appears to you wicked. I think that you are not called upon to volunteer that statement; you should wait for your favourable opportunity. The Master practically says that here. He says: "When opportunity offers, you will speak clearly against them," but He does not mean you to go about thrusting your ideas down other people's throats.

> There is a cruelty in speech as well as in act; and a man who says a word with the intention to wound another is guilty of this crime. That, too, you would not do; but sometimes a careless word does as much harm as a malicious one. So you must be on your guard against unintentional cruelty.

There again this word "crime". A cruel word is a crime. That again is the same thing. You must get into the attitude of watchfulness. People pride themselves sometimes on speaking just what they think. They say: "I always say exactly what I think," and seem to think that is a virtue. There

are cases when it might be a rather serious vice to say what you think at the cost of hurting somebody else. I do not say, refrain from putting your side of the case, but put it carefully, put it courteously, above all things. It is so odd, if you think of it, that you cannot, as a rule, differ with a person without getting more or less angry. It seems so very absurd. There are thousands upon thousands of questions in the world, upon which there is much to be said on both sides, on which one point of view is as defensible perhaps as the other, yet people do not seem to be able to talk to a person holding the other point of view without losing their tempers. You will find a discussion between a Catholic and an Orangeman exceedingly likely to end in blows, which, after all, is not a form of argument which carries conviction with it one way or another. To differ from your opinion seems to some to be a kind of slight. They are so sure that their opinion is right that any other man who disagrees with them is wilfully, and of malice prepense, declining to accept it. That is really the kind of line which many Christians will take, if you discuss Theosophy with them. They talk to you as if you must know that their point of view is the only sane one, and as if the only reason for your holding yours is simply that the devil has entered into you.

We have to be a little careful. This kind of thing is so much in the air that it may affect us. There is a special temptation with regard to Theosophy,

because we do base our belief on reason, and we only try to show people so, yet the other man cannot see. You must remember that reason, however perfect, however logical, does not necessarily impress the ordinary man at all; he does not live in his reason, he lives in his feelings, and if his feelings are roused by what you say, no amount of reason will convince him, and the more you talk, the angrier he will get. Then you say: "But it is not reasonable"; of course it is not, but it is no use telling him so. The fact that we appeal to reason will carry weight with the people who have power to reason, but not with a man who is a bigot. A bigot has no power to reason; his mind is made up and he is actually impervious to reason altogether.

It seems to me that this attitude of mind which the Master calls "love"—a general attitude of watchful kindness, is really more important than acquiring detailed information. It is a thing we ought to practise, though it is assuredly a good thing we should learn our system well also. Of course people talk very much about liberty of thought, but you will find that a very large number of them are willing to allow you liberty of thought only so long as you exercise it along their lines. Well, let us be careful lest perchance we should ever become like that. We ourselves ought to know exactly why we believe anything. You remember the remark made by the Apostle: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his

own mind." It does not say that he is to try to persuade other people; but let him know quite well what he believes, and then he will be able to state his case, when necessary, gently and temperately. You see, we must not despise other people who cannot see things quite as we do. Sometimes, you know, they are younger souls. It does not occur to you to despise a young man because he is young, you say: "Perhaps he does not know as much yet as he will do in fifty years hence, but we were all young once." There are many things he does not know yet, he will know them presently. In the same way, be gentle, be tender; you are more likely to bring him your way, if you are gentle, than if you are rough with him.

Then as to unintentional cruelty He says:

> It comes usually from thoughtlessness,

and here comes a page or two of examples, upon which we do not need to comment. You will notice that most of these things are applied to Indian conditions, but they can be applied also to other countries. You will find, for example, that some of the great American millionaires think nothing of making money simply by crushing thousands of other people. They do not care how many souls and bodies they ruin so long as they satisfy their lust for gold.

> It comes usually from thoughtlessness. A man is so filled with greed and avarice that he never even thinks of the

suffering which he causes to others by paying too little, or by half-starving his wife and children. Another thinks of his own lust, and cares little how many souls and bodies he ruins in satisfying it. Just to save himself a few minutes' trouble, a man does not pay his workmen on the proper day, thinking nothing of the difficulties he brings upon them. So much suffering is caused by carelessness, by forgetting to think how an action will affect others. But karma never forgets, and it takes no account of the fact that men forget. If you wish to enter upon the Path, you must think of the consequences of what you do, lest you should be guilty of thoughtless cruelty.

Of course you see that that is true; karma takes note. You may be in a brown study and walk over a precipice; the fact that you did not know simply does not count. Then He says:

Superstition is another mighty evil, and has caused much terrible cruelty. The man who is a slave to it despises others who are wiser, tries to force them to do as he does.

You must not despise younger souls. Of course the younger people are more sure they are right, and that is true of souls as well as bodies. It is the young Theosophist who knows all about Nirvana and exactly how karma works. The older people are quieter about that. I have even heard our President say: "When I first became a Theosophist I used to lecture about the Absolute, and thought I knew all about it; but now I am not quite sure that I understand the higher Manas perfectly." What she says of herself is true of many of us. At first we are very confident and then we begin to realise.

The Master here applies this word "superstitious" not only to religious matters but to others, because He goes on to say:

> Think of the awful slaughter produced by the superstition that animals should be sacrificed.

That was a delusion of many religions. The ancient Jewish religion, according to its own account, seems to have had that particular disease rather badly. I hope that the writers exaggerated; they had a habit of exaggeration. All young communities exaggerate immensely. Go back to earlier parts of English history and you will find local squabbles magnified into world-shaking conflicts. Take, for instance, the battle of Chevy Chase. It sounds as though whole kingdoms had been engaged, but it was merely one provincial lord who called out his men and attacked another. There are many cases of that, and I remember in the Old Testament one case where they assert they sacrificed at the same time 122,000 bullocks. It is a large order, you know. They may have done so, but I have considerable doubt as to whether so large a number at the same time existed in the whole land of Canaan. One hopes they did not, and that the historian put on a few naughts. In the East they have a way of putting them on.

> And by the still more cruel superstition that man needs flesh for food.

There again: that is a question to which you all know the arguments one way and another—if you do not, you may find them very thoroughly stated in our books. But you see He speaks of that as a superstition—an idea, that is to say, which has no foundation in fact. He says that it has led to very awful cruelty. Of course there is no question but that it is so. Both these ideas—that man needs flesh for food and that God needs sacrifices of flesh—are superstitions. No God who is worth anything could ever have revelled in the death of anything. It is certainly not a necessity that man should feed on decaying flesh, because thousands of people get on perfectly well without it, and therefore others can. We have to be on our guard against these things, which you would not ordinarily think of as superstitions, because they cause much suffering. He says that superstition is one of the sins against love: you can see how that is so. If the people really loved the animals and regarded them as younger brothers they would not sacrifice them to any Deity. They could not worship any deity which demanded such a sacrifice, nor could they eat the flesh of these younger brothers. So it comes round again that nearly all the things which men do which they should not do are sins against love. If they would only adopt the Master's attitude they would avoid all these things—the attitude, that is to say, of active hearty goodwill to all things. We are not Adepts yet

—far from it ; but at least we ought to be aiming at that, and it is a thing which is not difficult if we steadily practise it. If at first you assert to yourself that you have that quality and try to manifest it, gradually you will find that it really does become a part of you, and then you will be drawing nearer and nearer to the attitude of the Master, Who is a perfect expression, at His level, of the Divine Power which stands behind all manifestation.

XXI

August 24, 1915.

SUPERSTITION is among other things a very great want of sympathy. It does not understand that there are other ways than its own of looking at things. You might say that most race hatred is superstition. One race instinctively dislikes another race—*en masse, en bloc*—always a foolish thing to do, because there is good and bad in every race. You cannot be expected to like the bad as well as the good in any race, but all generalisations are faulty, and there is a lot of superstition and ignorance in this race hatred.

I remember in remote villages in England, places really out of the world, the attitude of the peasantry there towards a foreigner of any kind was always one of suspicion and ridicule. The fact that the man spoke a different language was something to laugh at. Of course that is absolutely illogical and absurd and shows the deepest ignorance; but that is the way in which it seemed to strike the English peasantry. There are other peasantries who in that particular respect are a little better. I have certainly known of cases of English people travelling in parts of France where no English is spoken, where they were always

well and courteously received. I think there are many races who are less uncourteous than our common folk are. It seems to me the whole question of the treatment of foreigners is only obscurely understood. I always felt that if a foreigner comes to visit your country you are in relation of host towards him, and that it is your duty to make his path easy and to give him as good an impression of your people and your country as you can. That seems a reasonable thing to do; but I know that is not the position very commonly taken up, and certainly, among the common people, a great deal of rudeness and crass ignorance is often shown in their attitude towards foreigners. All such prejudices as that simply come from want of knowledge; and that is a superstition, I suppose.

In the Napoleonic era there was a superstition in England that all Frenchmen were practically devils, fighting against us with the full knowledge that they were on the wrong side and against the light and so on; but that is a very foolish attitude. Even to-day you may get cases where a vast number of people are obsessed by one dominant idea, and to become obsessed with a dominant idea is to become a monomaniac. You will find cases where a whole nation is, for the time being, really swept off its feet by such an idea. A very unfortunate thing it is when that happens, and under the influence of such a temporary monomania very dreadful atrocities are committed; horrible things are

done, which the very same people would never dream of doing at other times. It is a most unfortunate condition of affairs. It is a condition which we, as students of these matters, ought to be able to recognise. We should understand that the individuals concerned are responsible only to the extent that they allow themselves to be swept away and that the things that they do are done by the monomania more than by the individuals themselves. In the same way a man will allow his temper to get hold of him, but you must take into consideration that probably the very same man will be quite sorry about it afterwards and so on. It is the same with some of these larger national obsessions that come over people at times.

In history they have been very common in regard to religion. You will find a number of people becoming madly fanatical. You know how Muhammadans and others will run amuck with a religious frenzy and try to exterminate people of different faiths from their own. In Christianity we have not been entirely free from things of that nature. The Crusades for example, were the results of a mistaken attitude. There was something in a way chivalrous and beautiful, no doubt, in that idea that the sacred places of a religion ought to belong to the people of that religion. As a matter of fact history has proved that it has been rather fortunate that they did not succeed. In that Holy Land, at the present moment, the Muhammadan soldiers have to keep peace between the rival Christian

sects, the Latin and the Greek, because they have always fought for precedence at the Sepulchre, and it is the Muhammadan soldiers who have to keep the peace. The way the Crusaders went to work to obtain their holy place was utterly irrational. At this very time in history we have a similar problem; but no one dreams of trying to settle it in the method of the Crusades. The holy places of the Buddhists, the place where the Lord Buddha was born, the place where He attained His Buddhahood, the place where He died—all those are in the hands of the Hindu faith, a religion which is as different from Buddhism as Muhammadanism is from Christianity. The Buddhists very earnestly desire to possess their holy places, but it has not occurred to them to gather together the Buddhist nations and start upon a war of conquest in consequence. I am very thankful that it has not, for the Buddhists number about five hundred million people. Their religion forbids them to do anything so irrational. They have tried to buy back the site, and they nearly succeeded in doing so. The Theosophical Society has assisted them, but a great deal of the money was lost in a law suit. That is a precisely similar case, where the sacred shrines of one religion are in the hands of people of another, but they are distinctly more tolerant about these things in the older religions.

In these Crusades, as I said, about twenty million people perished. That is a great many to be sacrificed

to a superstition. Then take all the work of the Inquisition. That was another case. Remember, too, the Massacre of S. Bartholomew and on another occasion the Sicilian Vespers. The last may have been partly political, but at any rate the Massacre of S. Bartholomew was primarily a matter of religion. No doubt political considerations came into it, as they did with Constantine when he became a Christian, thinking it a good card to play in the then position of affairs in the Byzantine Empire. The ill-feeling between the different sects of Christians was really very largely responsible for the massacre. We hope that such things as those would not occur in the present day. I am afraid that it is not quite certain that they might not, if any single religious body should have the practically unlimited power which the Roman Church had in the Middle Ages in Europe. I am not sure that there might not be persecutions still, that there might not be victims to superstitions. I am afraid that it is by no means improbable.

There are many different varieties of this superstition, and they all come from ignorance and from lack of sympathy with people. We who represent Theosophy have got over national feeling to a large extent. While, of course, we are patriotic, while we prefer our own nationality to any other, we should not like to think of ourselves as having been born in any other country than our own, yet we have members surely as intellectual, as spiritual, as

talented, as any born in our own country. If you read a roll of the names of great scientific men, of great artists, of great sculptors, of great poets, you know quite well that you get men of all races, and not of one alone; and so you know that all are in that respect equal. Some have one particular characteristic more strongly developed, and others have other characteristics.

You are a little way off from the centre of things, down here in Australia ; but if you could attend (some of you have done so, I know) the great Convention of our Society at Adyar or in London, you would be very much impressed, I am sure, by the gathering of people of different religions and races, and by the feeling of brotherhood that obtains among them—not a mere toleration but an active and kindly affectionate interest. It is one of the things that you do rather lose by your position down here. You have not the opportunity of seeing that to such an extent as we have had in other parts of the world. Those who have had that experience have certainly come to realise that the mere question of nationality is not after all one of importance, and we are perfectly willing to make all allowances for it, and to regard people of other nationalities in the most friendly and tolerant and affectionate way.

There is a thing like that, which falls upon you all, here and everywhere else, and that is to deal with people not of different nations, but of different

dispositions; and I think that, if you just face the fact, you will realise that it is hard to be perfectly tolerant and comprehending with people of different dispositions. I know that I myself have found it so. I have my own characteristics. My tendency is to take a common-sense point of view of anything and to reason about it and try to understand it. Now I constantly meet, in the Society as well as out of it, people who are not at all swayed by these considerations. It is with them all a question of the feeling of the moment, and that is the thing that sways them almost entirely. I do not understand it. I see it. I have to recognise it as a fact, but I do not understand how that happens, and it is difficult to help those people as well, as freely and as readily as others, because one does not really understand their motives. One, of course, gives them credit for good motives, but it is difficult to comprehend the thing. There are a number of dispositions of that sort. There is another disposition which I personally find it hard to understand, and that is the very gushing type of religious devotion; the type, I mean, which applies to its Deity all sorts of endearing terms, collected out of love-poetry and novels and that kind of thing. That always gives me a shock and an impression of irreverence, but it is not thus meant by the people who do it. You get an idea of it if you read the writings of Alfonse Leguerrier. You get all sorts of gush which seems to us a mawkish sentimentality to begin with, and

certainly it seems irreverent when addressed to a great Divine Power. But it is not so to the people who love in that way, and they consider us cold and without feeling, and unable to express ourselves, and so on. It is not that we feel any the less, but we do not think that such expression of feeling would be quite reverent or quite proper.

That, I think, is the side of the question that is likely to come down here before you. We do not see so much of the different nationalities, but we do find among our members and in our work these different types turning up, and we have to learn to work with them all. It is precisely one of the most difficult things, but the theory that you cannot work with them is a superstition, and if your particular attitude is so highly superior to theirs, then the French saying *noblesse oblige* should come into the question. You are in so much higher a position; therefore you ought to be able to understand and take in this other position which to you is less and not so important. To confess that you cannot get along with those people is to say your system is not sufficiently perfect to take in everything; for here are some people who cannot be included within it. If you are in so much higher a position, then you should be able to make allowances for those other unfortunates who do not look at these things as you do.

This question of types is a very interesting study; but our business in studying it is not merely from the

standpoint of curiosity, but because we want to help them all. We are all of us, I hope, putting before us, as our greatest object in life, the idea of service in one way or another. There are many ways in which we can serve, but all demand a certain amount of comprehension of people differing from ourselves and a vast amount of tolerant sympathy with them. When people want to gush, well, let them. Stand there, and let the rain come down on you; look as if you liked it so far as you conveniently can. And when you find people who are cold and intellectual you must make allowance for them also. It is not that they have no feeling, but their feeling lies so deep that they cannot show it on the surface. We have to free ourselves from the superstition that our way is the only way. People who are so familiar with the Deity are certainly trying to other people who feel a deep reverence for the Deity. There are people who are sure what He means and how He regards their little family quarrels and so on—well, for them I suppose it is all right; it would not be for me.

The Master speaks here of the superstition that animals should be sacrificed. It is unfortunate that the idea has come on to modern times, because it does belong to an earlier stage in history altogether. We ought to be perfectly clear as to that, and I am quite sure that every one of you, if you saw anyone trying to sacrifice an animal, would come forward and protest at once against it. But because animal sacrifice is

largely spoken of in the Hebrew part of the Scripture, people are often afraid to speak out about it. We must clearly understand that no Deity whom we should wish to worship would desire the offering of blood ; it is quite clear that the offering of blood is desired by certain classes of elementals and by certain nature-spirits who feed upon its fumes. That is the reason for the outpouring of blood in sacrifice, and any deity whatever who desires the commands of blood sacrifices must be of that type You cannot conceive the Supreme Father, who gives forth His own Life, desiring to have life sacrificed in His honour. The thing is altogether ridiculous. It would be stultifying His action in evolution. We, who are Theosophists, ought to have our minds clear about these things. So often people allow remains of old feelings to prevent them from quite facing facts and I think that is rather a mistake. They do not say openly, for example, that the sacrifice of animals is a horrible thing, because of the fact that they often have it spoken of with great commendation in the Scriptures. One would point out that, after all, the Scriptures of any people are suited to that people at the stage of their development when these Scriptures are written ; that, after all, the world does advance, and that therefore there must inevitably be some things in all the Scriptures, as in other old books, which are not in harmony with the ideas of the present day. Take the novels of two hundred

years ago in England. You will find a great deal in them you would not like to read aloud to your family. That does not necessarily show that we are better people; but it does show that we have changed our manners, and that some things, which were then matters of common conversation, are not so to-day. If you go back to any old Scriptures, you will find that they all speak of and refer to conditions of affairs which to-day we should regard as horrible.

There is much in the Vedas which you would not like at all. You hear so very much of the wonderful beauty of the Indian Scriptures. It is true that some parts of them are very wonderful, very beautiful; so are some parts of the Bible. But just as there are in the Bible stories which might with very great advantage be expunged from it, and a vast amount of so-called history which certainly has no existence in fact, so do we find the same thing is true of the Hindu Scriptures. Only a very small number of those Scriptures have yet been translated; and of course the parts which have been translated are the best parts. There is no particular reason for translating the other parts. There is a great deal about sacrifice and many other unpleasant customs of those earlier days, which we do not need to perpetuate.

We want to be eclectic about Scriptures as well as about everything else. You take up a book and you pick out those passages in it which you think beautiful and helpful. There are many people who read in

that way. They would never think of keeping the whole of the book. They take out, here and there, what they think is suitable; and in just the same way we should treat the ancient Scriptures. We should take from them what is noble and beautiful and grand and good for all time. There is plenty of it. But we may, with great advantage, leave aside those parts which do not come up to the level of modern requirements. There will no doubt be, in process of time, a new Scripture compiled, that will be made to suit us of the present day; but in a thousand years that will be out of date also. There will be new ideas and new discoveries; and so, although the great truths are the same, the method of putting them by means of scripture or of sermons will have to differ, and it is foolish to imagine that one particular set of words must be sacrosanct and valid for all times.

With regard to the whole question of the Deity, it seems to me that there are only three fundamental views that you can take about God and His attitude towards men. (1) You can suppose Him to be absolutely indifferent. You can suppose Him to have started the whole business and not to care in the very least what happens to it. That is, of course, the materialistic idea, except that the materialists do not usually accept the idea of God at all. But if they did accept the idea of God, they would say that He lets everything take its own course. That is a theory which could be maintained.

(2) Then there is the other theory that God is malevolent, that He will do harm to men, if He is not bought off from doing it,—if He is not paid off by sacrifices and offerings. You have to face the facts. If you think clearly, all religions which deal with sacrifices are taking that idea of their Deity. That comes with a sort of shock to many people because of the sacrifices of the Jews. The Jews now represent a very highly developed race, but they have had their earlier days and their beginnings, just as we had. We are proud, and not unnaturally or unworthily so, of our English origin, but you must remember that if you go back two thousand years you will find that we were then a race of naked savages running about in the woods and painting ourselves blue. That does not alter the fact that the English origin is a very fine thing; but it would be ridiculous thing to maintain that at that time our ancestors represented a highly developed race, because they did not. The Jew of the present day would recoil with horror from the sacrifice of several hundred animals at a time to the Deity; but according to their own account they did not so recoil in the days of David and Solomon, if these worthy people ever existed. Although sacrifice is mentioned in your Psalms and in other parts of your Bible you will have to face the fact that no good God ever wanted sacrifices. I know it follows that Jehovah was not a good God. He was merely one of the great elemental deities

coming over from Atlantean times. As such, he would welcome sacrifices and would live upon the fumes of blood.

Coming down to New Testament times, the Christ does not advocate any of those things at all. There is nothing about blood and sacrifice in His theory of religion. He spoke of God as a loving Father—which is a perfectly different thing. If our Christian brothers would only follow the teaching of the Christ and not confuse them with the teaching of the Jewish Scriptures (just because Christ happened to take a Jewish incarnation that time) they would save themselves a lot of inconsistency and trouble. Any God whose nature it is to do harm if He is not paid off and prevented from doing so is not a good God, not a God that any of us could possibly worship. Do not you see how that old Jewish idea has forced itself into Christianity and how much harm it has done to Christianity? It has loaded it down with the idea that a sacrifice was necessary, and that people would be sent to Hell for ever, if there were not sacrifices. That is why they invented the amazing theory that God sacrificed His only Son instead of all these other people. You hear of this thing from your youth up, and it is put to you as such a wonderful thing. I suppose most people never look at it from the other side at all. They never think what kind of God it could be who would require or permit such a sacrifice. You can imagine what would be

said of any earthly King who acted like that,—who condemned quite causelessly a quantity of people to horrible tortures, and then when His own Son came forward and said: "If you must kill somebody kill me. I have not done anything, but never mind, kill me and let these people go free," acquiesced in the arrangement! What would you think of a King who did such things? That theory is not Christianity. But it is the sort of thing that is taught by the Christians who know about that much of the truth of the thing. There is a theory which is magnificently greater than that. It is the theory of the descent of Christ into matter, because Christ is born in every one of us. All that is said is perfectly true. But if you understand it in that horribly materialistic form, you must see that you make of your God a demon, and that is an evil thing to do. Colonel Ingersoll was right when he said that an honest God was the noblest work of man. You can see the truth of the idea—that only a nation which was already highly developed could rise to the conception of a really grand and glorious Deity. It is true that our forefathers, at the time of which I am speaking, had their conceptions of the Deity, but they were crude. Our ancestors were not in a position to understand anything very metaphysical. The Jews in the Old Testament were a warlike race, and their great idea was always to conquer the other races they come across and bring them to worship their own particular

deity. People at that stage could not have grasped the idea of what we now mean by God. They had to have a Lord of Hosts, a leader in war, who would take their side whether they were right or wrong and carry them through to victory. That was the only kind of God they could have had at the time; and there have been a good many Christian nations whose ideas have not been dissimilar in that respect.

The Jew rose to a higher conception of God in later times when they were taken prisoners into Babylon. They had had glimpses of older civilisations before, when they had come into contact with it in Egypt, but it had made very little impression upon them; for they managed to keep themselves apart. But in Babylon they were bound to learn about a Supreme God. Of course they promptly identified Him with their Jehovah; that was only characteristic. After that what they wrote about Him becomes very different. You find some of those later prophets writing magnificently about Him, but still bound down by their old ideas which keep cropping up with the new one. Very rarely do they write as a Babylonian would have written, who was always familiar with the idea of the Supreme Deity.

(3) The third theory—that God is beneficent—is the theory we hold in Theosophy. Theosophy holds that He has brought this whole scheme of things into existence for a definite purpose which it is steadily pursuing all the time, and that therefore everything

that happens is part of that scheme and fits in with that scheme. I do not mean that He Himself (though here we speak of things as to which we can only speculate) necessarily designed all that happens. He allows a certain amount of free will to His creatures and they do things very often which are clearly not in harmony with His great Plan; He must allow them to do these things because otherwise there would be no free will. I cannot say whether we are right in holding Him responsible for it all. I do not know. He has spoken uncompromisingly along that line, you remember in the Jewish Scriptures: "I am the Lord, I create evil,"—a curious remark, you know. And you will remember in the Indian Scriptures something of the same sort. I take it that that must mean simply that there is no life which is not His life and that therefore in that sense He is the doer even of the evil. But the evil has been done by—how shall we put it?—by fragments of His Consciousness which are not yet in tune with the rest, not yet fully developed; but since all life is His life there is a point of view from which we must say He is the only Actor, the only Doer.

I spoke to you of the very crude idea of Christianity which exists among the Salvation Army and similar bodies, but you know there is a much better aspect of Christianity coming forward to-day. For a long time now Christianity has been much better

than its Creeds, and very many Christians have held wider views than their Church authorities. I myself was a priest of the Church of England. That church formulates what it supposes to be the theory of things in a certain production called "The Articles of Religion". I do not know whether any of you have ever read them. If you have not, I should advise you to do so. The clergy have to read them and have to assent to them. But if you ask: "How am I to accept these Articles? They are evidently self-contradictory," you will be told that, at the time when they were written, there were two irreconcilable parties and something had to be said to please them both. They say: "The Bishops and the rest of us, we have all signed them, we have all taken them in this philosophic way; and since we have done so I think you may do so too." The young man will probably say: "Well, I suppose that, if you assure me it does not mean anything, I may as well accept it." But you know it is not quite dignified.

I have no objection to the Christian Creeds; there is a meaning underlying them, but it is not in the least what the Christian thinks they mean. I do object to the Thirty-Nine Articles and the Confession of Faith, because with some most beautiful ideas they contrive to intermingle others which are absolutely impossible. If in the Catechism they had only stopped at the end of the first question, "What is the chief end of man?" and the answer is "To glorify God and enjoy

Him for ever "—if they had stopped at that, that is a magnificent Creed. If only they had left it at that and not gone on to say things about other people—but they did not. Christianity has gone very much ahead of its authorised pronouncements and beliefs. I came across a passage the other day which showed that rather clearly. There is a book by the Dean of Ripon in which he says quite plainly: "The development of Christ in man is the object of Christianity," and then he goes on to explain what the Christ in man is: "It is the wisdom of the man of science, it is the eloquence of the lawyer, it is the firmness of the judge, it is the love of beauty in the artist, and it is the love of man in the philanthropist," and so on. That kind of Christianity we all accept. You see there is very much the same thing in the *Gita*: "Of rulers," says Shri Krishna, "I am the sceptre; of those who seek victory I am statesmanship; and of secrets I am also silence; the knowledge of knowers am I. Whatsoever is glorious, good, beautiful and mighty, understand thou that to go forth from a fragment of my splendour." You see the Christian Dean is very nearly in agreement with the Atlantean writer of the *Bhagavad-Gita* (you know the *Bhagavad-Gita* is very much older than the *Mahabharata*, in which it is incorporated). The story of Arjuna and Krishna was written by the writer of the *Mahabharata*, into which it is fitted, but all the really glorious part was brought from Atlantis into Central Asia and was

then translated into Samskrit. But that represents certain facts which we have seen.

We may trust God utterly, because, to put the thing quite plainly, He knows and we do not know. He has a scheme; we know that scheme is evolution. We know, in a general way, what is expected of us in the helping forward of that scheme, but all the details of it are not known to us. They unquestionably are known to Him. Each man does not even know what his own past karma is. He knows only a certain part, from the way in which it is presenting itself now. But the greatest Powers, who are managing the whole thing, know what that man's karma is, and how much of it can usefully be brought down upon him now, and how much has to be saved up for another time, and so on. They who know can be trusted to do the work well, and any interference on our part is sure to be an interference for the worse. As I said in a lecture I gave on prayer some-time ago—if it were possible for the Great Ones to listen to us and change our destiny in accordance with what we think we would like at the time, it would be the worse for us. They, knowing all, are already doing the best for us that can be done. I do not say that our own aspirations in the matter are useless—very much the reverse. If we have good aspirations, then those are new factors introduced into the case, and those new factors may well enable the Great Lords of Karma to modify the

working of our karma. They may be able to bring down more, so that the man may be rid of it and may get it out of the way. It may cause them to alter the incidence and bring it down in some other way. But whatever is done is done for the best—for every one and not for a few only; and so, as I said in that lecture, we surely should not try to alter God's will. We should thankfully accept whatever comes to us, always making the best of it, not the worst, always taking it as a lesson, taking our difficulties as something to be dominated. We should not just lie down and endure; we should take them and try to transmute them, so as to make good qualities and good karma for the future. You must trust the law utterly. All is going as well as (taking everything into account) it can go. At any moment, you may, by throwing into it a new impulse of your will, or power, or good and noble feeling, make it possible to go a great deal better. We are not the slaves of destiny; but we may be sure that all that comes to us is absolutely the best that can come.

XXXII

August 31, 1915.

ONE of the superstitions condemned by the Master, you will remember, is that man needs flesh for food. That is, of course, a superstition, because there are many thousands of people who exist in perfect health without it. There are probably some few people who, owing to bad heredity, and of course to their own karma, are really unable to make their bodies digest the purer forms of food, but they are very few. I have myself known of some two instances, I think,—among the great many thousands of Theosophists, and others—who, after really trying for a long time to adopt vegetarian diet, found that they were absolutely unable to do it; but all the rest, after a certain amount of difficulty just at first, were able to settle down to vegetarian food. It is unquestionably proved that people (all but a very few) can exist perfectly well without saddling themselves with the crime of taking part in the slaughter of animals. I think that we all know that perfectly well, and I have no doubt that all of us are doing our best so to live.

I think that Theosophists ought to know why it is undesirable to take flesh for food, and I do know that

a great many do not. They have a general idea that it is cruel to kill animals, but I do not know that it goes very much beyond that. They know that the flesh foods bring undesirable particles into their bodies, but they are not, as a rule, conversant with the arguments in the question. There are plenty of such arguments, and I think that we ought to familiarise ourselves with them to some extent, because that is one of the things which people often ask us about, and to them you must always, I think, make it clear that vegetarianism is not a necessity to the Theosophist. I mean that the Theosophical Society does not exact vegetarianism from its followers; yet all those who do understand anything about the matter are of course avoiding the eating of meat; and I think they ought to know fully why they do so, and what are the arguments to be stated in favour of vegetarianism. I marshalled them together once myself, in a lecture which you will find in a book called *Some Glimpses of Occultism*, which I have no doubt is in this library. Anyone, therefore, who is not acquainted with the arguments, might borrow that book and familiarise himself with them and take notes from them, so as to have something to say if anyone asks him why he abstains from a meat diet. I think you can make it abundantly clear to any enquirer that it is entirely to his interest to abstain from that food. Of course, that lecture was delivered some ten years ago, and no doubt many additional

instances and arguments might be obtained now. Still, you will find a very fair array of them there, quite enough for ordinary purposes, I think.

You need to understand that it is not merely a question of principle, although surely that is enough for us, but because a vegetarian diet means better health, the avoidance of certain diseases. Also definite facts are in our favour, showing that those who take vegetable food have greater endurance and so on. There are a great many arguments, of which, if you will read the lecture, you will find a very fair summary.

Of course, you know that people sometimes object that, in any case, we must destroy life in order to live; that they who are vegetarians also destroy life. That is very true to a limited extent. I suppose you may be said to be destroying the life of an apple when you eat it, but you could save the pips and plant them. But then, you know, apple trees are propagated altogether in another way, by cuttings. In the same way, when you eat bread you are, of course, eating grains of corn, which might have been planted and might have made more corn. On the other hand, you set against it that you are not destroying the plant life. The plant has lived its life and, as these grains which you eat have no sentiency, the plant might have no objection, so to speak; so that you cannot be said to have been guilty of any form of cruelty. Nearly all plants produce seeds in

quantities so vast that it would be impossible that all should be used. Therefore I do not think that we are open to any serious reproach in that we use that potential life food. After all we must have something to eat; and even supposing that we do destroy vegetable life, that would, you will understand, be a very much less serious matter than the destruction of any advanced animal life. You have to go back to fundamentals; and the real reason why killing is wrong is because it interferes with the course of evolution and gives a certain amount of trouble—small truly—but a certain amount of additional trouble, to the Ministers of Evolution. If you kill a man, you do no harm to that individual, so far as his pleasure and his happiness are concerned. You merely lift him to a higher plane, where he will be very much happier than he will be on the physical plane. So the wrong to the man is not in that way; nor is the destruction of the physical life necessarily cruel, because a man killed suddenly simply does not feel it. The wrong that you have done a man, when you kill him, is that you have cut him off from the opportunity of evolution which he would otherwise have had in that body. He will have it still in another body, but you are giving the Logos, or His representatives, the trouble of again finding a place for that man's evolution, of carrying it again through babyhood and childhood—conditions which are merely preparatory conditions—before he has

received the result he has a right to expect from that incarnation. That is why it is so much more serious to kill a man than an animal—because the man needs a separate place. The animal flows back into his group-soul, and has again to find his manifestation. In the case of the more evolved animals that is a very complicated manifestation, and causes, if we may reverently put it so—a great deal of trouble to the Evolutionary Powers. The killing, say, of a mosquito is an infinitely smaller matter, because he flows back into a group-soul and comes out in a very short time, unfortunately. At any rate you can see at once that the trouble caused to the Evolutionary Powers by the destruction of hundreds of thousands of those small things is as nothing compared to the killing of one horse or cow or cat or dog. The more complicated the creature is, the greater is the harm done by killing it. So this whole question of death becomes one of the balancing of the dangers—the balancing of the harm done. There is almost no conceivable case in which it could be the right thing to kill a man for any purpose of your own, but there are many cases in which it might be the right thing and the only thing to do,—such as to kill a man in defence of some one else. Even in self-defence the law admits it for the ordinary person. For us—well, your President would say at once it is another matter. She would say the yogi does not defend himself; he leaves the whole matter

in the hands of karma. Still I think, myself, that we are justified in defending our lives when they are attacked, and I am quite certain that we are justified in defending a friend or a child if attacked, even at the cost of killing the one who attacks. Therefore the same thing holds good with regard to animals—even the most developed animals. An animal which attacks you, which endangers your life or your safety, you would, I think, have a right to attack in turn, even if necessary to kill. But remember that your President would probably not admit that, unless you were defending somebody who was definitely in your charge, so that it is simply a moot point. But the whole question there is, which would be the greater harm? If, for example, you are troubled by a mosquito, when you are doing some important work, it might, it seems to me, very well be the lesser evil to kill the mosquito. If you can take refuge behind a mosquito net it is better, or if you can drive it away.

I think you should have a clear thought as to the whole ethics of destruction. If it were impossible for us to live without taking the life of an animal, then it would be at least arguable that we had the right to take the life, since the value of our life, from our point of view, is the greater. Of course the animal's point of view is another matter. From ours, our point of view is more important. That cannot be claimed, because it is not in the least necessary;

so that it becomes, as it is said here, a superstition. If then it be true that we have to take vegetable life, in order that we may live, then you see we are taking life at very low stage of evolution, and after all we must live somehow. But it is quite to be argued that we are not taking any life which would otherwise have to find room on earth. That is the answer to the objection I think, when it is made. Of course, you can also say—though that would be equally applicable to the eating of meat—that if vegetable life is destroyed, it is turned into and made part of a higher life.

We have to use our common-sense about killing. There are many cases where small forms of life, for example, render our lives practically impossible. You have the theory of non-destruction of life carried to the utmost in certain places, as, for example, where some decline to kill vermin, and allow themselves to be eaten by them. Well, that does not commend itself to any civilised person. You, who have a library of books, will sometimes find your books attacked by silverfish and so on. It seems to me that you must destroy that kind of life. If you could drive them away it would be better; but it is better certainly that you should destroy such insects, than that you should allow good books, which might be of use to others besides yourself, to be rendered useless. I think we should use common-sense in all these matters, all the way through.

Of course it is true that the yogi never destroys life. But then you must remember that his food is always provided for him, while the agriculturist who provides it has to protect his crops from grubs and worms and so on. The yogi does not need to do that; so he does not do it. Then the Master goes on to say:

> Think of the treatment which superstition has meted out to the depressed classes in our beloved India, and see in that how this evil quality can breed heartless cruelty even among those who know the duty of brotherhood.

Well of course that does not appeal to you in the same way as it does to the people in India. The depressed classes in India, the Pariahs, sometimes called the Panchamas, or the "Fifth" Caste—who are really "outcastes," are the descendants of the original inhabitants of India. The Aryans found them there when they came over the Himalayas. They have been very badly treated. The religion warned the people not to intermarry, mix or eat with them, but they have been treated with what amounts to great cruelty. For instance, there is only one well in a place; the pariah is not allowed to approach that well to draw water because he would contaminate it for the higher castes; consequently such people have had to undergo great hardships. They of course cannot touch any food set apart for higher classes and have been put to very great inconvenience and sometimes to very serious

suffering in that way. The Theosophical Society has tried to do something to ameliorate their lot, and has opened a number of schools, for of course the children could not, until lately, be received in any school in India. The teachers must be either white people, or liberal caste people, or Pariahs. So you can see the treatment which superstition has meted out to the depressed classes even among people who make a speciality of brotherhood, how those people have forgotten their brotherhood because of their superstition.

Many crimes have men committed in the name of the God of Love, moved by this nightmare of superstition.

One other point about all superstition is that the man who does most harm is generally the one who has the best intentions, who is standing loyally to the letter of his law. A really selfish bad man—there are such people though perhaps not so very many of them—is concerned mostly with gratifying his own desires. He does not want to interfere with you unless you come in his way ; so, after all, he does not do so much harm to the world. But the stupid person with good intentions is really far more serious because he always wants to interfere with others.

Missionaries, for example, are a case in point. I do not doubt that the missionaries sent out from these countries have done much good among Central African savages and people of that type. But in India, where any common labourer in the street

knows more than a missionary knows about the philosophy of religion, about all the greater and higher ideas, the missionary is ludicrously out of place. His intentions are good enough, but he does a very great deal of harm. Many wars have been caused by their very irrational methods; their country has had to step in and save them from what they call " martyrdom ". That is an example of the way in which the man with good intentions may do a very great deal of harm, and that is one of the worst features of this superstition. In the case of the Massacre of S. Bartholomew and other similar atrocities of which I have spoken, the people who did them thought they were doing God's work—but it was their religious bigotry which made it possible for them to think that they were doing God service when they did those terrible things.

So the Master says:

> Be very careful therefore that no slightest trace of it remains in you.

It is desirable to be careful; the emphasis which is laid upon it clearly shows that there is a danger that we may be superstitious without knowing it, so that it is well that we should watch.

> These three great crimes you must avoid, for they are fatal to all progress, because they sin against love.

You see once more how prominent love is all through this book. Well, that is the special line of our Master Koot Hoomi, whose work the book really is.

It is very difficult for you to understand, I suppose, exactly how the Masters, who contain within Themselves all the highest and the noblest qualities which you can imagine, can yet somehow have one more than another. Our Master Morya, who represents to us the First Ray, has for His greatest characteristic Power. Yet it would be absolutely untrue to suppose that He had any less of Love or Wisdom than any of the other Masters. Our Master Koot Hoomi belongs to the Second Ray, that of the Bodhisattva. Their characteristic is Love, Wisdom and Compassion, and yet we should be quite wrong in supposing Him to have any less power than a Master on the First Ray. There are differences, there are distinctions; it is not easy for us to understand. In the same way there are distinctions of levels among Those Great Ones. The Bodhisattva stands higher far than our Masters. To us They appear all of glory so great that we cannot venture to make any distinction among Them. As it is said in the Christian Bible, " One star differeth from another star in glory," but it is not easy for us to distinguish between them. They are all Suns of blinding light, and to us there seems no difference between a great Angel and a Devaraja, yet one is a whole kingdom, a whole evolution, above the other. To us They are all simply great. The Solar Logos must have greater power than all these that are part of Him; we only know that it must be so. It seems as though He Himself could be no more, and

yet somehow He is. All possibilities of goodness, so to speak are already there. It is not more goodness; but greater power; greater knowledge, I suppose. Only the knowledge and power of the Master are so much greater than ours that the whole thing is one blinding glory; but the distinction exists.

But not only must you thus refrain from evil; you must be active in doing good. You must be so filled with the intense desire of service that you are ever on the watch to render it to all around you—not to man alone, but even to animals and plants. You must render it in small things every day, that the habit may be formed, so that you may not miss the rare opportunity when the great thing offers itself to be done.

That is a very important point—that the habit of constant service may be formed, because you know how habit will assert itself, even in the most unusual surroundings, or in the greatest emergencies. Of course that is the whole reason of the long and rather painful drill through which you put your soldiers,—not only that they may know exactly what to do when certain orders are given, but that they may have certain habits instinctively as part of them. When a man went into battle in the old days (I do not know about modern French battles), in the old kind of battle at any rate, and goes now he finds himself in absolutely novel surroundings, under conditions that may well try his courage. However brave a man is, yet, because it is something entirely beyond his experience, the whole thing is confusing

beyond anything you can imagine. A man might well be excused if he lost his head and went wrong, but he has so ingrained in him the habit of doing certain things, the habit of obeying certain orders, that, even though he may lose his head, he obeys them because of the habit set up. You see how useful that is in an emergency. In the same way we ought to get into the habit of service. You might very often miss the chance of helping some one unless you had formed the habit of looking out keenly for it; but if you have that habit you are not likely to miss many opportunities. That is why we are to be on the watch.

This remark about being active in doing good is not directed in any way against those whose activities are on other planes. Such a remark as that might be used, as I said before, against the Contemplative Orders of monks and nuns, and indeed against the Brahmana caste in India; but that would be a wrong use. The theory of the Brahmana caste in the old days—it has absolutely departed from it now—was that the Brahmana was the leader of the nation, and he was therefore supposed to devote all his time to the performance of certain duties, ceremonies and rites, which would benefit not only himself but all the community. It was entirely for that reason that the community supported him. The other people, whose lives were taken up in ordinary work and in making money, supported him because

he was doing this spiritual work for them. The same is the idea of these Contemplative Orders. They also depend on charity. There are in Catholic countries Orders of monks and nuns whose whole time is taken up in praying for the dead. Now that is sometimes spoken of, by reformers, as a shameful waste of time;—that is a different and a modern point of view. In the days when these arrangements were made it was recognised that the dead and the living were one community, and that those people, in devoting their time to working for the dead, were performing a far higher service to the community than they would be, for example, by the growing of corn. Therefore the people received their living in charity, and were in no wise ashamed of it. Our modern civilisation has become very individualistic, and to beg is absolutely an offence against the law, at least in England; and if a beggar is an able-bodied person, he is regarded with a certain amount of scorn. But those people who lived the spiritual life were working for the community, and the food given to them was simply a recognition of that, and those who gave it felt themselves highly honoured to give it. The whole conception then was entirely different; there was no shame whatever attached to begging for a living; in fact those who did it were the most spiritual of the people, and they did it because they were bound by the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. The whole thing was quite different from

anything to which we are accustomed. To condemn the people who live in that way is to make exactly the same mistake as was made in the French Revolution when they said that a philosopher or a writer was a man living an absolutely idle and useless life, that he ought to be breaking stones upon the road. That shows that they did not understand.

Then He says:

> For if you yearn to be one with God, it is not for your own sake; it is that you may be a channel through which His love may flow to reach your fellow men.

You see the whole idea of this book is to get yourself into a certain attitude. It is not so much to know as to be: that is, to live the Theosophical life; to be filled with love for all and with an intense desire to help evolution; so that you are constantly watching, so that, in point of fact, you forget yourself in the service of others. A man may do that and yet be in the most intense activity. If you ever saw a surgeon perform a great operation, then you have seen how a man in the most intense activity, and with the keenest use of brain and hand, can yet be absolutely absorbed, not in himself, at all, but in the work he is doing. Often that happens in war too; a man forgets himself utterly in the effort to save a wounded compatriot, or to perform a great deed of heroism, and so perhaps gains a Victoria

Cross or something of the kind. So the Master says:

> For if you yearn to be one with God, it is not for your own sake; it is that you may be a channel through which His love may flow to reach your fellow men.

It is not for yourself that you desire to rise, but to gain this greater power of service, to become one with Him, so that you may work with Him. You must be a channel, not a passive channel, but an active channel. I know that the idea is beset with difficulty, and yet if you try to grasp it I do believe it will help you. The Logos is omnipotent in His system; He pours out force at all levels in that system. We cannot but suppose that He could flood the whole system with that force at any level and to any extent that He chose. As a matter of fact He does not do that. The amount of force poured out on each level seems to be a definite amount, and of a definite kind only, and so it remains that we, who are sparks of His fire, can do certain things which the Great Flame of which we are a part does not do. We cannot say that He could not do it, but merely that He does not apparently. He pours out at each level a certain amount of force. It is within our power, by means of intense devotion, by setting our will to work all along with His Will, to draw down more force from higher planes, to transmute and to send it out, to do work which would not be done, as far as we can see, unless we did it. Now we can only say that He does not do

it, not that He cannot. It would seem that He depends on our co-operation. That, remember, is His force, because there is no force which is not His. We bring down the force, and with it we do apparently what would not be done if we did not do it. So He goes on to express the same idea:

> He who is on the Path exists not for himself, but for others; he has forgotten himself, in order that he may serve them.

Yet you know, only a little while ago in evolution he was a very powerful separated self. That is how he made so strong a centre, but he has learnt to forget that, in order that he may pour out love and help to other men.

> He is as a pen in the Hand of God, through which His thought may flow, and find for itself an expression down here, which without a pen it could not have.

That is the same idea, you see, that I was trying to express to you. It would seem that He must have calculated that at a certain stage of evolution He would have many such pens through which He could write. It would seem that He actually calculates upon your work and mine as part of the Universe—that God Himself, as a poet put it, "needs you and me". Well, it seems so. He has made us in order that we may help Him; our help is part of the Plan. That is a very grand idea, I

think, and a very helpful one, because we see at once that, if we have been able to reach a level of knowledge, of love, power which is a little higher than that of others, it is only in order that we may be of use. Then He says:

> Yet at the same time He is also a living plume of fire, raying out upon the world the Divine Love which fills his heart.

In point of fact, there are always two ways; the Occult and the Mystic. The Occultist makes his way by work; the Mystic retires into himself as it were, and appears from the outside to be thinking only of himself, and of his own relation to God. Perhaps, indeed, we shall be doing him no injustice if we say—in many cases that is the idea which dominates him—that he shall become utterly one with God. But even in the act of so becoming he must send out, and he does send out, a tremendous influence on all the world around him; so that it is not possible to say he is entirely selfish, because he is producing a great effect upon those about him. Our idea as Occultists is to raise ourselves step by step through all the different stages until, at a certain high level of Initiation, we can merge our consciousness in the Third Aspect of the Deity; then in the Second Aspect; then in the First. The Mystic throws himself into the Divine Life here as he stands; but it is a lower manifestation of the Divine Life, and he has to work his way up in that.

Then comes the final paragraph:

> The wisdom which enables you to help, the will which directs the wisdom, the love which inspires the will—these are your qualifications.

Note very specially and carefully "the wisdom which enables you to help". You must have wisdom if you want to help, otherwise you will make the mistake which is so often made by those who are full of good intentions and yet do not know how to apply their goodwill. You need the wisdom before you can really help. Then He says:

> Will, Wisdom, and Love are the three aspects of the Logos; and you who wish to enroll yourselves to serve Him, must show forth these three aspects in the world.

With these words ends this book. It is a very remarkable and beautiful sentence that one; it would be well for us all to try to remember that we must have these three aspects, Will, Wisdom, and Love, and we must try to show them forth to the world and live as manifestations of Him.

Then at the very end of the book, just to finish it, you get, you remember a little piece of poetry:

> Waiting the word of the Master,
> Watching the Hidden Light;
> Listening to catch His orders
> In the very midst of the fight;
>
> Seeing His slightest signal
> Across the heads of the throng
> Hearing His faintest whisper
> Above earth's loudest song.

That is a very quaint little bit of verse; of course that is not written by Alcyone. I believe it was found, most of it, in some Christian tract. The first line or two we ourselves had to add. The thing was in a mangled condition; only part of it was discovered, but it is not our work, save for the first two lines, and I presume it was intended in the tract to refer to the Master Jesus, but at any rate it comes in very well indeed with reference to our Master.

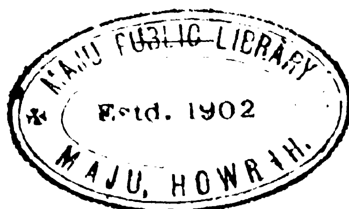
You see, we speak of "Watching the Hidden Light". Those of you who are Masons know very well what was the Hidden Light in the Mysteries of Ancient Egypt, and what was the Hidden Work which in Egypt we were always trying to do, because that was the very work which we are even now trying to carry out, and you know very well therefore that is still one of the Master's most important branches of work—a very necessary part of the work to be done for Them. The Hidden Work which produces the Hidden Light; so, you see, we are to be watching and working and trying to catch our Master's signal—"His slightest thought".

Now there are three things which prevent our doing that; there is the struggle for existence in the world; there is the great crowd of people about us in the world; and then there are what are called the pleasures of the world. Those three things more or less becloud and confuse many people, so that they cannot at once catch the thought of the Master.

People get entangled in these things. Well, one can only say to them, "Remember the Hidden Light; try to regard everything as the Master would regard it; try to see what things are important and what things are unimportant, appraising them as you know the Master Himself would appraise them, so that in this way you will gain the wisdom which is one of your great qualifications." You have, I hope, the Love; surely you have the Will, although it seems sometimes as though that will flagged. But we must remember that those three are the manifestations of the Divine, and that we, who wish to work with God and for God, must possess within ourselves those attributes of God.

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